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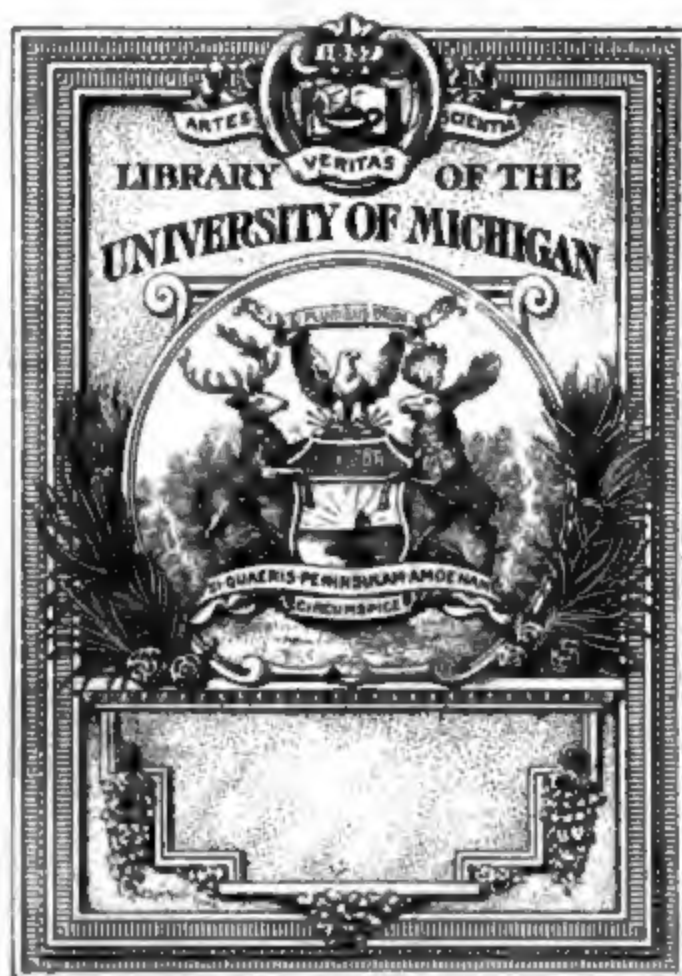
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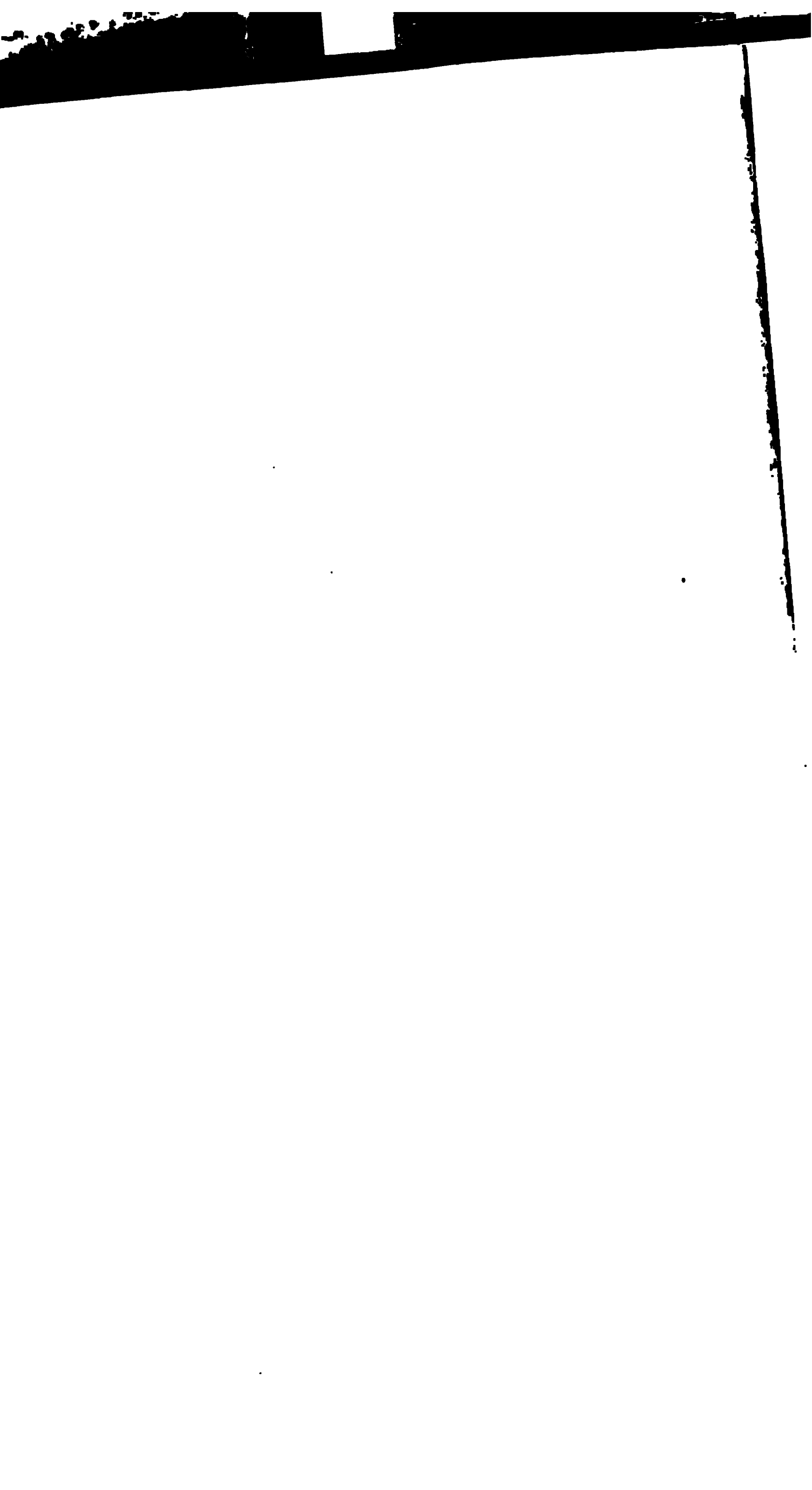








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# PROCEEDINGS

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF

THE NATIONAL CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE

*= Annual Report*

HELD IN

NEW YORK CITY, APRIL 25 AND 26, 1893.

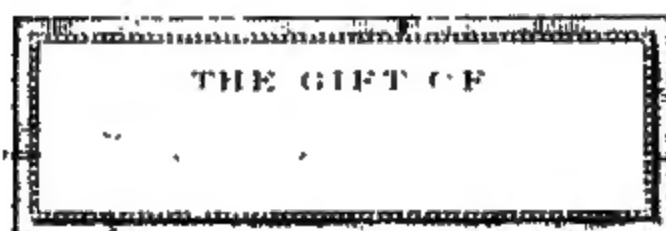
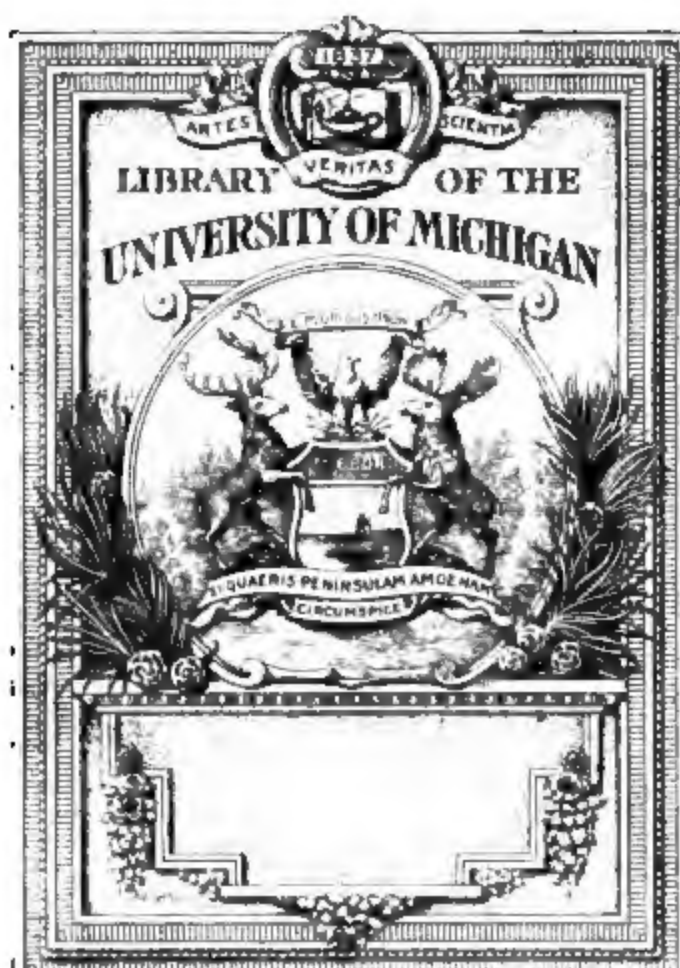
WITH THE ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT,

HON. CARL SCHURZ,

AND OTHER MATTERS.

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NEW YORK  
PUBLISHED FOR THE  
NATIONAL CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE.  
1893.





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WASHINGTON, D. C. :  
PRESS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT.

ANNUAL MEETING  
OF THE  
NATIONAL CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE.

APRIL 25 AND 26, 1893.

PURSUANT to call duly issued, the thirteenth Annual Meeting of the National Civil Service Reform League was held in New York City on the 25th and 26th of April, 1893.

The annual Address of the President was delivered at the Madison Square Garden Concert Hall, at eight o'clock on the evening of the 25th. It is as follows:

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## CIVIL SERVICE REFORM AND DEMOCRACY.

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*An Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the National Civil-Service Reform League in New York City, April 25, 1893.*

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BY HON. CARL SCHURZ.

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When I was honored with the request to deliver this annual address, I accepted the charge with very serious misgivings. For I remembered that many successive years, on occasions like this, you have been wont to listen to a voice the exquisite charm of which still lingers in our ears and will never cease to echo in our hearts. No man can succeed George William Curtis here without being oppressed by the consciousness of inability to fill his place. It would be a vain attempt to rival his annual addresses in their abundance of knowledge and illustration, their ripeness of thought, their strength of reasoning, their delicacy of humor and their literary grace. They were so complete an arsenal of facts and arguments that it is almost impossible to speak on the same subject without repeating him, and the repetition will always fall short of the original. And no one succeeding him at the head of this National League can hope to be so naturally, so spontaneously accepted as the ideal leader of an organized endeavor for purity, justice and honor in politics. It may be said without in the least straining the sense of words that George William Curtis and the cause of Civil Service Reform were made for one another. All that the Reform aspires to was illustrated and exemplified in his personality.

Who can speak of him in other than tones of eulogy?

It is a consoling satisfaction to the soul of a friend to do so. We, members of the League, who have worked with him so long, are fond of recalling the many titles he held to leadership among us; his sincerity, unselfish devotion, and singleness of purpose; his profound understanding of the subject and large experience; his fearlessness in the defence and in the application of his principles; his keen discernment of opportunity; his absolute freedom from small jealousies; his cheerful and generous recognition of the merits and services of others; his gentleness in meeting adverse opinions; his sense of justice and his fine tact in composing differences; the inspiration flowing from his very being in the common endeavor for high aims. All these things gave him without question the first place in our councils. The leadership, therefore, fell to him by a general consent, the absolute unanimity of which, never broken, proved that we all felt it to be due to our cause and due to him. Thus the death of Mr. Curtis is to us, in the truest meaning of the word, an irreparable loss. He could not bequeath to us his genius nor his virtues. He could leave us only his teachings to remember, the inspiration of his zeal to quicken our own, and his noble example to follow as best we can.

But if he were now here to dictate my speech, he would call it away from himself and direct it to the cause which he cherished so much, and which was in so large a sense his own. Indeed, the ultimate victory of this cause will be the fittest monument of this great citizen whom we who knew him well so warmly loved, and whose memory the American people can never too highly honor.

It is a comfort to his surviving friends to know that, although he did not witness the full consummation of his endeavors, he lived at least long enough to see his cause rise from small beginnings to a measure of success promising complete triumph at no very distant day. The question is only what President and what political party will carry off the greatest honors of the achievement.

I speak of this with so much assurance because Civil Service Reform has grown and flourished in spite of the bitter hostility of an overwhelming majority of the professional politicians in both parties. They have exultingly proclaimed its death and burial a hundred times. It has survived an endless number of obituaries. They have derided it, and reviled it, and plotted for its destruction in a hundred ways. Without knowing it, by their very enmity they have advanced its progress. Men have begun to respect and to love it for the enemies it has made. We have not far to seek for the reason. What is Civil Service Reform? It is the application of common sense and common honesty to the public service. And the American people are in the main a sensible and an honest people. It is the restoration to full power of honorable and patriotic motives in our political life. And the Americans are, in the main, an honorable and patriotic people. Therefore they will insist upon the general application and enforcement of Civil Service Reform principles in the same measure as they recognize how sensible and honest and patriotic those principles are. In the acquisition of this knowledge they are at times powerfully aided by striking object-lessons. Recently they had one of them.

The Fourth of March last a new Administration went into power. Untold thousands of men poured into the national capital clamoring for office; not for offices that were vacant, but to be vacated in order to make room for the clamorers. No matter whether he was ever so good a public servant, the man who was in was to be kicked out, to let him in who was out, no matter whether he would be not half so good a public servant. The office-hunting throng swept into the White House and into the Departments like a cloud of locusts. The President, sturdy as he is, could hardly stand up before the impetuous onset. The Cabinet ministers, all new men in their places, who felt the urgent need of studying somewhat their Departmental duties, were hunted down so that they had hardly time to eat and to sleep, much less to study. When their cry for pity availed nothing,

they at last barricaded their doors with strict regulations. They went into hiding in order to save some hours for the business of the Government. The Post Office Department was not only overrun by the crowd, but snowed under with written applications and recommendations for office which in huge heaps covered the floors of the rooms, and the whole force of the Department had to work after business hours merely to open and assort them. Senators and members of the House of Representatives ran wildly about like whipped errand boys to press the claims of greedy constituents or mercenary henchmen. It was what Mr. Cleveland calls the madness for spoils in finest efflorescence.

And what are these claims for office that are so vehemently urged? I know them well from long and varied experience. Special fitness for the duties of the office is the one thing which even the most daring claimant but seldom dares to claim. He does indeed claim that he can do one thing as well as another if he is only permitted to try, like the Yankee who, when asked whether he could play the violin, answered, he guessed so, but he had never tried. So the office-seeker is ready to try his hand at administration. In most cases the claim to office is based upon party service, the payment or collection of money for the campaign chest, the making of speeches, or other political work deserving reward. And this claim is fortified with all sorts of reasons appealing to sympathy. Here is a patriot who has a large family to support and needs a postoffice to help him along. There is another who wants a consulship abroad because he himself or his wife is in bad health and a change of climate would do good, or his daughter has a fine talent for music which should be developed in Europe. There is still another who wants the prestige of official recognition in the shape of a collectorship or a marshalship to enable him to exercise still higher political authority over the minds of his fellow-citizens. A man in Kansas, so the papers report, recently urged the appointment of his daughter to some place in the postal service in connection with the World's Exhibition at Chicago, on the

ground that she would be the largest public servant in the country, weighing four hundred and seventy-two pounds. And for aught I know, this qualification is as good as many of those seriously urged.

This spoils carnival has been going on since the Fourth of March, and it is not ended yet. In a measure it continues through the larger part of the Presidential term. I affirm and maintain that the American people are heartily disgusted with a spectacle so absurd, so ludicrous, and at the same time so barbarous, shameful and revolting—a spectacle exposing the American name to ridicule and reproach. When speaking here of the American people I do, of course, not mean *all* the people. I do not mean the machine politicians of the two parties, who live on spoils. I do not mean Tammany Hall. I do not mean those poor creatures in Congress and in other high places who know they have not ability enough to sustain themselves as statesmen, and depend upon a following bought with patronage to prop them up. I do not mean the selfish speculators in politics, who find in the corruption underlying the patronage trade a congenial element. Nor do I mean those who like to be fed at the public crib, no matter whether they furnish an equivalent for their salaries. All these classes are the fast friends of the spoils system; but they form only a small minority of the American people. When I speak here of the people, I mean the men and women who earn an honest living by honest industry. I mean the patriotic citizens who have the welfare of the country, the success of free institutions, and the honor of the Republic sincerely at heart.

In their earnest endeavor to serve the public interest, these people may be warm partisans. They wish their party to be successful and to win control of the Government. But a large majority of them are in their inward souls disturbed and disgusted when they see, after a party victory, hordes of partisans pounce upon the offices of the Government like a band of greedy mercenaries plundering a captured city. They are ashamed when, after the incoming of a new Administration, they

hear of a President wishing to abolish this scandal but not being permitted to do so by the ravenous spoilsmen of the party, and of an official guillotine at work and of so many heads falling every day. This shame and disgust may not, by all who feel it, be loudly expressed in words ; but nevertheless it exists, as in times gone by the conscientious abhorrence of slavery existed among the masses of the Northern people long before exciting events loosened their tongues.

But there is one part of the public service which now remains untouched by the tumultuous debauch of the spoils carnival. It is like a quiet, peaceable island, with a civilized, industrious population, surrounded by the howling sea. The President and the chiefs of the Government Departments contemplate this part of the service with calmness and contentment, for it gives them no trouble while the turmoil of the office-hunt rages all around it. The good citizen, anxious for the honor of his country, beholds it with relief and satisfaction, for here he finds nothing to be ashamed of, and much that is worthy of this free and great nation. This is the "classified service," covered by the Civil Service Law, the creation of Civil Service Reform. On the portals the words are written: "Nobody enters here who has not proved his fitness for the duties to be performed." The office-hunting mob reads this and recoils. The public servant within it calmly walks the path of his duty, undisturbed by the thought of the greedy cormorant hungering for his place. He depends upon his merit for his security and advancement, and this consciousness inspires his work. This is the application of common sense and common honesty to the public service. It is Civil Service Reform.

The present Civil Service Law was enacted under President Arthur. Under the Rules established by virtue of it applicants for clerkships and other subordinate places in the Government Departments in Washington and in the greater custom-houses and postoffices in the country have to pass appropriate competitive examinations to prove their fitness for the places they seek, and



the appointments are made from those rated highest, without any regard to political affiliation or influence. Removals are discretionary with the appointing power; but inasmuch as the element of favoritism is eliminated from appointments, removals are no longer made merely to make room for more favored individuals. The public servant who proves himself faithful and efficient is, therefore, wherever the law is honestly observed, substantially secure, no matter to what party he may belong. And it may be said that, under the national Government, the law, as far as it reaches, is honestly observed. That it is universally recognized to be so is due, more than to any other man, to Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, who, as a member of the United States Civil Service Commission, has performed his duties with rare fidelity, energy and fearlessness. All the high officers of the Government whose working force has been under the operation of the Civil Service Law have, without any notable exception, borne emphatic testimony to the fact that the law has relieved them of serious difficulty and trouble, and has given to the country a greatly improved service.

At the close of President Arthur's administration in 1885 the number of places classified, that is, covered by the Civil Service Law, was about 15,500. At the close of President Cleveland's administration in 1889 it was about 27,300. At the close of President Harrison's administration in 1893 it was about 43,400, to which should be added several thousand laboring men in the navy yards placed under similar rules by the voluntary and most laudable act of Secretary Tracy. As the whole number of places under the national Government amounts to about 180,000, we may say that more than one-fourth of the service of the national Government has ceased to be treated as mere spoils of party warfare. In one-fourth the party boss has lost his power. One-fourth is secure from the quadrennial loot. In one-fourth influence and favoritism go for nothing. One-fourth has been rescued from barbarism. One-fourth is worthy of a civilized country. So much Civil Service Reform has accomplished in the time of three Presidential terms. But

great and encouraging as its progress has been, Civil Service Reform, having conquered only one-fourth of the service, has done only one-fourth of its work.

There are still the laborers in the Government Departments and the higher grades of the clerical force, such as the chiefs of division, to be brought under the Civil Service Rules. These Rules are to be extended to many offices in which they are not yet in operation. The quadrennial slaughter, this relic of American savageness, has to be abolished first with regard to the fourth-class postmasters, of whom there are at present about 65,000, and whose execution *en masse* has so frequently caused conspicuous scandal. A bill regulating the appointment, and in effect precluding the wholesale removal, of this class of public servants, has already been before Congress. This or a similar measure should be pressed until it becomes a law. Meanwhile it is reasonable to ask that the spirit of Civil Service Reform be observed in all executive appointments. Although the President, in making the so-called Presidential appointments by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, cannot under the Constitution be bound by rules restricting his power, yet he may impose rules upon himself for the government of his own conduct in the exercise of the appointing power, so as to strip the offices of the character of party spoil and to treat them as what they are really intended to be: places of trust and duty, to be administered for the benefit, not of a political party, but of the people.

I know patience is one of the most necessary and most useful of virtues, especially in the pursuit of great reforms. But this virtue should not be cultivated to the extent of disregarding and neglecting any really existing possibility. And even the soberest view of the circumstances surrounding us at present persuades us that the time is fully ripe for a further and a very essential advance in the Reform of the Civil Service. Since the enactment of the Civil Service Law every President of the United States has done something to extend the area of its operation. As it is said that no rich man in Bos-

ton can decently die without leaving a sum of money to Harvard University, so it seems no President can quit office without commending himself, by a tribute to Civil Service Reform, to the merciful judgment of posterity. But President Cleveland has authorized us to expect from him a legacy of extraordinary value.

He is known as a man of genuine convictions, and may be trusted to mean what he says and to act according to his meaning. On no subject of public concern, neither on the tariff, nor on the currency, nor on constitutional principles, has he expressed himself with deeper earnestness, with more emphatic directness, than on the necessity of Civil Service Reform. Here are some of his words:

I venture to hope that we shall never again be remitted to the system which distributes public positions purely as rewards for partisan service. Doubts may well be entertained whether our Government could survive the strain of a continuance of this system, which upon every change of Administration inspires an immense army of claimants for office to lay siege to the patronage of Government, engrossing the time of public officers with their importunities, spreading abroad the contagion of their disappointment, and filling the air with the tumult of their discontent. The allurements of an immense number of offices and places, exhibited to the voters of the land, debauch the suffrage and rob political action of its thoughtful and deliberative character. The evil would increase with the multiplication of offices consequent upon our extension, and the mania for officeholding, growing from its indulgence, would pervade our population so generally that patriotic purpose, the support of principle, the desire for the public good and solicitude for the nation's welfare would be nearly banished from our party contests and cause them to degenerate into ignoble, selfish and disgraceful struggles for the possession of office and public place.

And in his last inaugural address he said:

One mode of the misappropriation of public funds is avoided when appointments to office, instead of being the rewards of partisan activity, are awarded to those whose efficiency promises a fair return of work for the compensation paid to them. To secure the fitness and competency of appointees to office, and to remove from political action the demoralizing madness for spoils, Civil Service Reform has found a place in our public policy and laws. The benefits already gained through this instrumentality, and the further usefulness it promises, entitle it to the hearty support and encouragement of all who desire to

see our public service well performed, and who hope for the elevation of political sentiment and the purification of political methods.

These are patriotic and statesmanlike utterances. The man who pronounced them showed that he well understands the nature of the disease, and he would not permit us to doubt his honest determination to apply the remedy. It is true, his words do not distinctly promise this or that specific measure. But he points out so clearly the evil to be redressed and the end to be reached, that the adoption of efficacious means is obviously implied. If "the system which distributes public positions purely as rewards for partisan service," which "debauches the suffrage and robs political action of its thoughtful and deliberative character," the system which makes it doubtful "whether the Government will survive its continuance," is to be done away with, if "the demoralizing madness for spoils" is to be stemmed for the sake of the better performance of the public service and "the elevation of political sentiment and the purification of political methods," then, evidently, public offices must cease to be regarded as political patronage and be treated in the truest sense as public trusts; the Civil Service Rules, recognized as efficacious, must be extended to all the branches of the service to which they are applicable, and the principles of Civil Service Reform, recognized to be correct, applied to all appointments, whether they can formally come under the Rules or not. Nothing could be plainer.

We may, therefore, reasonably expect that President Cleveland, who now has the benefit of a larger knowledge of men and things than during his first term, will exert his whole power to do what the Administration which preceded him promised but failed to do—extend the Civil Service Rules to all branches of the service to which they are applicable, and cause the spirit and purpose of Civil Service Reform to be observed in all executive appointments. It is especially to be hoped that, as to Executive appointments and removals, a beginning may be made with the 65,000 fourth-class post-

masters; that the sweeping changes in this branch of the public service formerly customary may yield to civilized methods, and that the savage spectacle of the quadrennial postmasters massacre may forever disappear, to be remembered only as a relic of barbarism which strangely survived among the freest people on earth, down to the last decade of the nineteenth century.

When a President announces his firm determination to stop this savagery without fear or favor, and to be governed only by the public interest in making such changes in any branch of the service as may be necessary, it will probably no longer be difficult to carry through Congress a law regulating the appointment of the minor postmasters upon sound Civil Service principles. Then the superstition that every branch of the administrative machinery must be manned with adherents to the party in power will be thoroughly exploded, and the back of the spoils system will be broken forever.

I venture to affirm that the President who gives the decisive impulse toward such a consummation will render the Republic a more lasting service, will entitle himself more to the gratitude of posterity, and will achieve greater renown for himself by this one act than he could by the most ingenious device of taxation and the most brilliant financial policy. For he will have removed an evil threatening not only our material welfare, but the very vitality of our free institutions. He will have imparted a new moral spirit to our political life, rendering infinitely easier the rational solution of the other problems hanging over us.

To doubt that President Cleveland sincerely wishes to accomplish this would be to doubt that he is an honest man. The question may be asked whether his party will not throw discouraging obstacles in his way, such as the Republican party threw in the way of President Grant and his successors, and whether he can be moved by them from his purpose. But the Democratic party should be the last to do so, if it is to deserve the name it bears; for Civil Service Reform is, in its field, the most perfect realization of the true democratic principle.

The truest definition of democratic government is furnished by Abraham Lincoln's famous saying that it is "government of the people, by the people, and for the people:" *of* the people, for the people constitute the sovereignty from which it springs; *by* the people, for the people through their chosen representatives and servants conduct it; *for* the people, for it is to be conducted solely for the people's benefit. The people are, therefore, evidently entitled to the best service they can get, and no interest, neither that of a political party nor that of any citizen, has a right to stand in the way. Those entrusted with the power of appointing officers are, consequently, in duty bound to regard office solely as a public trust, and to appoint only persons found fit-test to give the people the best possible service.

Democratic government rests upon the principle of equal rights. It abhors privilege and favoritism. But it is privilege and favoritism upon which the spoils system rests—the privilege of those in authority or of influential politicians to dispose of the public offices as their patronage, distributing that patronage by way of personal or political favor. It is justly said that the offices belong to the people and must be open to the people. Most certainly. But what does this mean? Does it mean that they must be open only to those who have influence themselves, or who have the influence of powerful politicians behind them? No; according to true Democratic principle it means that the offices must be open to all citizens according to their fitness to fill them; that they must be *most* open to those who are *most* fit to fill them; that free and equal opportunity must be furnished to all for showing who are the most fit, whether they be rich or poor, politicians or no politicians, backed by influence or not backed. Under the spoils system the offices are open only to the privileged few—those favored by the influence of the powerful. Civil Service Reform has undertaken to open the offices to all according to their ability to serve the people. The spoils system asks the candidate for office: "Does your member of Congress recommend you, or does the party boss in

your State or your county ask for your appointment? Or are you backed by a man who gives much money to our campaign fund? What men of influence have you behind you? If you have none, you can have no place." Civil Service Reform asks the candidate: "Are you a man of good character, and what can you show to prove it? What do you know? What can you do? What qualifications have you for serving the people? Have you more than other candidates for the place?" On the one side, under the spoils system, the aristocracy of influence—and a very vulgar aristocracy it is—robbing the man who has only merit, unbacked by power, of his rightful chance. On the other hand, Civil Service Reform, inviting all freely to compete, and then giving the best chance to the best man, be that man ever so lowly, and be his competitor ever so great a favorite of wealth or power. On that side the aristocracy of "pull," on this the democracy of merit.

This is the true Democracy, and, as a Civil Service Reformer, I have a right to say, "I am a Democrat," Senator David B. Hill to the contrary notwithstanding. But what are you, spoilsman? You may be whatever else, but as a Democrat you are an impostor.

The spoils politician is fond of objecting that Civil Service examinations do not always point out the fittest man for the place. Perhaps not always. The best marksman does not hit the bull's-eye every time; but he misses it rarely. The Civil Service examinations may have a small record of failures. But what the system, fairly conducted, *always* does is to snatch public office from the undemocratic control of influence and favoritism. And there is the point which stings the spoils politician. It would trouble him little whether or not the fittest man is put in the proper field of action. That is not what he cares for. But that the reformed system so effectively repels the demoralizing touch of political favor, that it so thoroughly takes away from the office the character of spoil, that it does not tolerate public place to be a means of bribery and an article of barter—this the spoils politician will never forgive us, for it destroys his trade.



The very democracy of Civil Service Reform makes the spoilsman's heart sore with sorrow, and in the bitterness of his soul he wildly denounces it as an aristocratic notion imported from England, and as a thoroughly un-American contrivance.

There is no better illustration of the democratic character of Civil Service Reform than its history in England. Our opponents might read with profit, although they would read with dismay, the excellent work of our friend Mr. Dorman B. Eaton on the Civil Service in Great Britain. They would find that England, too, had its spoils system once, with all the characteristic attributes of tyranny, corruption and demoralization. They would find that the struggle against the spoils system there was a struggle against the abuse of the royal prerogative and the predominance of the aristocracy. They would find that England had its movement for Civil Service Reform, and that it was a movement for honesty and economy in government, and for the rights of the citizen. They would find that the growth of Civil Service Reform in England went hand in hand with the decline of aristocratic influence, and with the growth of the democratic idea in government. They would find that the progress of the democratic idea there in the shape of Civil Service Reform has banished from the service the power of influence and favoritism; that it has truly opened the public offices to the people; that it has given the poorest child of the people the right freely to compete with the son of the richest peer to show his fitness for official employment within the Civil Service Rules, and to obtain it according to the showing; that it has vindicated the right of the best man to the best chance. They would find themselves forced to the conclusion that the spoils system, as it has grown up in this Republic in the last sixty years, is only a relapse into the corrupt and demoralizing patronage system of monarchical and aristocratic England when it was at its worst, and that Civil Service Reform is the embodiment of the truly democratic principle there as well as here.

That it is so here as there, does that make it un-Ameri-

can? What fool is there to pretend this? It is just as little un-American as Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights; just as little as the common law, trial by jury, and the writ of habeas corpus; just as little as constitutional government, free press and free speech; just as little as common honesty and common sense. In fact, the principles of Civil Service Reform are none other than those which governed the original Democracy of America. Thomas Jefferson is called the father of the Democratic party. The sons would do well to learn and inwardly digest and keep living in their souls the lessons taught by the sire. What are those lessons? Jefferson was elected to the Presidency after one of the hottest party contests this country has ever witnessed. He went into power in 1801. There was a heavy pressure for place from members of his party, the offices being almost all in the hands of the defeated Federalists. What did Jefferson do? Let us see. On March 24, 1801, he wrote to Dr. Rush:

With regard to appointments. I have so much confidence in the justice and good sense of the Federalists [the defeated party] that I have no doubt they will concur in the fairness of the position that after they have been in the exclusive possession of all the offices from the very first origin of party among us to the 3d of March, at nine o'clock in the night, no Republican [Democrat] ever admitted, and this doctrine newly avowed, it is now perfectly just that the Republicans should come in *for the vacancies that may fall in, until something like an equilibrium be restored.* But the great stumbling-block will be removals, which, though made on those just principles only on which my predecessor ought to have removed the same persons, will nevertheless be ascribed to removal on party principles.

He then designates some persons that should be displaced, and proceeds:

Of the thousands of officers, therefore, in the United States, a very few individuals only, probably not twenty, will be removed, and those only for doing what they ought not to have done. I know that in stopping thus short in the career of removals I shall give great offence to many of my friends. That torrent has been pressing me heavily and will require all my force to bear up against; but my maxim is *fiat justitia, ruat cælum.*

And in his letter of July 12, 1801, to the merchants of New Haven, he said:

It would have been a circumstance of great relief had I found

a moderate participation of office in the hands of the majority. I would gladly have left to time and accident to raise them to their just share. But their total exclusion calls for prompt corrections. I shall correct the procedure, but that done shall return with joy to that state of things when the only question concerning a candidate shall be, Is he honest? Is he capable? Is he faithful to the Constitution?

I invite the modern Democrat to contemplate in a spirit of candor and soberness, and perhaps with some reverence, the example set by the father of the Democratic party. The Federalists, the first party in possession of the Government, had filled almost all the offices during three Presidential terms. When after a furious contest the Democrats came into power, the provocation for sweeping changes was as great as it has ever been since. What did Jefferson do? He was a warm partisan himself, and a keen politician too. But did he permit himself to be swept off his feet by the greedy clamor of his adherents? Did he resolve upon a clean sweep and, in the sanguinary parlance of to-day, "set up the guillotine" to make the heads of Federalist placemen promiscuously fly into the basket? Did he proceed upon the idea that under a Democratic Administration all Government officers must be Democrats? Not he. He deplored that the Federalists should have found it necessary to fill almost all the offices with Federalists. He denounced this as an injustice; but he did not propose to retaliate by being as unjust as they had been. He simply declared his purpose to equalize the possession of the offices between the parties by making a small number of removals, but only for cause, and then by filling vacancies as they might otherwise arise in the ordinary course of things with a just proportion of Democrats. This done, then Jefferson would joyfully return to the regular practice of making appointments on the sole ground of fitness without regard to party.

It was thus clearly Jefferson's professed object, not to make the Government service a partisan service, but on the contrary to take from it the character of a partisan service which it had borne before; and then to start it anew on a distinctly non-partisan basis.

How did he carry out this plan? He did, indeed, make some removals, perhaps a few more than he had originally intended, and more than his Secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin, wished him to make, but in the eight years of his two Presidential terms he made after all only thirty-nine, and, as he often solemnly affirmed, not one of them solely for party reasons. There being at that time no law limiting the tenure of offices to four years, and officeholders being not in haste to die and unwilling to resign, the process bringing about the equilibrium was necessarily trying to patience. But Jefferson saw no danger to his country nor to his party in the circumstance that a large number of the offices still remained in Federalist hands; for, being a sensible man, he knew that a postmaster had to receive and distribute not Democratic or Federalist letters, but simply letters; that a collector of revenue had to handle not Democratic or Federalist money, but simply money; that the officers of the United States courts had to secure and enforce not Democratic or Federalist justice, but simply justice; that Indian agents had to take care of not Democratic or Federalist Indians, but simply Indians; and so on. This was Jeffersonian Democracy—the Democracy which Thomas Jefferson not only preached but practised.

He stood not alone. With him James Madison and Albert Gallatin formed the famous triumvirate which initiated the Democratic epoch and has ever since remained the most brilliant constellation of the Democratic firmament. Of these James Madison was the greatest constitutional authority. He had been one of the makers of the Constitution and he has always been respected as one of its weightiest contemporary expounders. He expressed it as his opinion that under the Constitution the power of removal from offices filled by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate rested in the President alone. But did he think that the President had the lawful power to remove meritorious officers merely to put party friends in their places? Let us hear him: "The President who does that," said Madison,

“will be impeachable by the House before the Senate for such an act of maladministration, for I contend that the wanton removal of meritorious officers would subject him to impeachment and removal from his own high trust.” Nor were these idle words. These principles were well kept in mind by the Democratic Presidents of that period; for we find it recorded that Madison, during the eight years which he was President, made only five removals; Monroe during his eight years only nine, and John Quincy Adams during his four years only two.

Nor was Gallatin, the great financier and administrator of the triumvirate, of a different mind. In a circular to the collectors of revenue drawn by him he emphatically expressed his desire “that the door of office be no longer shut against any man, merely on account of his political opinions, but that, whether he shall differ or not from those avowed either by you or by myself, integrity and capacity suitable to the station be the only qualification that shall direct our choice.” And then he went on to say that officeholders should not use their official standing and opportunities as a means of partisan influence.

Such was the Democracy of Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin, the greatest apostles of the Democratic church in America. And it may not be presumptuous to suggest that Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin are as Democratic authorities preferable to Hill, Murphy and Croker, and even to Senators Gorman of Maryland, Voorhees of Indiana and Vance of North Carolina, to whom Civil Service Reform is an abomination and the distribution of offices as spoils a necessity of political life.

It may be profitable to consider what an Administration conducted on the principles of Jeffersonian Democracy would do under existing conditions. It would, of course, scorn the idea of making “a clean sweep,” turning out all public servants belonging to the opposite party, to put in its own. It would not make a removal except for good cause connected with official conduct, and it would utterly reject the notion that such a cause is furnished by the circumstance that a man has been in place

four years—a notion, by the way, from a business point of view, so strikingly preposterous that it is amazing how it could ever be seriously considered among sensible people. Imagine a merchant discharging his salesmen and book-keepers, a manufacturer discharging his foremen and artisans, a railroad corporation discharging its engineers and switchmen, a bank discharging its cashiers and tellers every four years on the ground that they have been in their places long enough and somebody else ought to have them now—would you trust a bank conducted upon such principles with your deposits, and would you like to travel on such a railroad?

The Jeffersonian Administration would, therefore, as a matter of common sense, never think of applying to the far more important Government business a rule which would be scouted as criminally absurd when applied to the business of a railroad or a bank. It would go further, and consider as an improper removal the non-reappointment of a meritorious officer to whose place the existing four-years-term law applies, and it would do all in its power to bring about the repeal of that mischievous law. It would remember that this law was in its very inception a fraud practised upon the people. Crawford, the Secretary of the Treasury under Monroe, instigated its enactment under the pretence that it would give him better control over officers handling the public money, a pretence the futility of which became soon apparent. His real purpose was to strengthen his hold upon the officeholders and to make them further, as a political machine, his chances for the Presidency. The bill was passed without debate, and Monroe signed it in a hurry without consideration. Thomas Jefferson, in a letter of November 28, 1827, addressed to James Madison, called it “the mischievous law vacating every four years nearly all the executive offices of the Government.” And thus he described, with admirable foresight, its effects:

It saps the constitutional and salutary functions of the President, and introduces a principle of intrigue and corruption which will soon leaven the mass, not only of Senators but of citizens.

It will keep in constant excitement all the hungry cormorants for office, render them, as well as those in place, sycophants to their Senators; engage them in eternal intrigues to turn out one and put in another, in cabals to swap with, and make of them, what all executive directories become, mere sinks of corruption and faction.

Madison replied: "The law terminating appointments at periods of four years is pregnant with mischiefs such as you describe." And in a letter to Monroe he raised serious questions as to its constitutionality. Its repeal was urged by the foremost statesmen in our history, Clay, Webster, Calhoun and others, but in vain.

An Administration conducted on Jeffersonian principles would not permit so iniquitous a law to survive; for if the law was mischievous then, it is, in consequence of the multiplication of the offices to which it applies and the greater "madness for spoils," infinitely more mischievous now. A Jeffersonian Administration would certainly never think of still increasing the mischief by applying a four-years rule to offices to which the four-years law does not apply—such as the minor postoffices. And I am glad to learn that the rumor which ascribed to the Post Office Department the intention of adopting such a rule is unfounded.

A Jeffersonian Administration would recognize that the mere practice of permitting officers belonging to the opposite party to serve out their four-years terms, then to be all supplanted by men of the ruling party, would not be a reform of real value. It might be an improvement upon more brutal practices formerly prevailing, but it will in the course of four years result in a general partisan change. It will be a clean sweep slowly and bashfully executed, a clean sweep ashamed of itself, but a clean sweep for all that, to be followed by another clean sweep when the other party comes into power; a substantial continuation of the old demoralizing abuse. It will have only one merit, the merit of carrying the proof of its own inconsistency on its face. Look at it. A Democratic executive permits Republican officeholders to continue in place, one, two or three years until their terms expire. The Democratic executive

thereby recognizes two things: firstly, that these Republican officers are good officers—for if they were not, they would have been removed for cause; and secondly, that Republican officers may continue to serve under a Democratic Administration without detriment to the public interest. In other words, the Democratic executive practically recognizes that the public interest does not demand the displacement of these Republican officers; and yet, taking advantage of the mischievous four-years-term law, the executive displaces them—displaces them confessedly without valid reason.

The Jeffersonian Administration will not do things so irrational; but, casting aside all inconsistencies and subterfuges, it will simply follow the precept given by Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin, remove only such officers as are, upon fair ascertainment, shown to have become obnoxious to the public interest; fill vacancies in such a way as to give the service an unpartisan character, and ask about candidates only: "Is he honest? Is he capable? Is he faithful to the Constitution?"—employing, in order to secure to such questions reliable answers, the most trustworthy methods and instrumentalities. This is Democracy according to Jeffersonian teaching. It is the destruction of the spoils system. It is Civil Service Reform. And he is no Jeffersonian Democrat—he is no true Democrat at all—who will obstruct, or, rather, who fails actively to support the President in any endeavor to bring about a practical return to these sound Democratic principles.

Is such a consummation beyond reasonable hope? Why should it be? I do not underrate the difficulty of uprooting abuses which seem to have become imbedded in popular habits and ways of thinking. But no brave man will recoil before an error because it appears popular; and frequently he will find it in reality far less popular than it appeared before he resolutely attacked it. Those of us who witnessed the first beginning of the Civil Service Reform movement might well have been discouraged by the seeming hopelessness of the undertaking. The politicians despised it as an idle



dream of visionaries, and waved it aside with a sneer. The people seemed to ignore it with stolid indifference. The first practical attempt resulted in dismal failure. That public sentiment was in any degree prepared for it when the work was begun, few of us would have been sanguine enough to affirm. But that public sentiment became rapidly prepared for it as the work went on, nobody will now deny. The present danger is, not that those who have the matter practically in hand rush ahead of public sentiment, but that they lag behind it.

One by one the old fictions by which the spoils politician sought to discredit Civil Service Reform are vanishing into thin air. Of the demagogic pretence that it is an outlandish notion imported from England, and an un-American contrivance, I have already spoken. We still hear sometimes the silly story that it will build up an officeholding aristocracy. That people should fear the growing up among us of an aristocracy of millionaires—that I can conceive. But think of an aristocracy of revenue collectors, custom-house appraisers, district-attorneys, and United States marshals! Imagine a nobility composed of postmasters, Indian agents and Department clerks! If there be anything like a feudal aristocracy in politics, it is that born of the spoils system—the party bosses, the machine leaders, the dealers-out of patronage—such as King Croker, Duke Murphy, Marquis Sheehan, Earl Gilroy and the sturdy barons holding fiefs and wielding power as Tammany district leaders here—a somewhat rough nobility to be sure, but quite as enterprising as any that levied tax on unprotected merchants' wagons and upon the unwary traveler's purse in the Middle Ages. It is for the Jeffersonian Democracy to deal with this precious chivalry.

There is the other curious conceit that the spoils of office are necessary to hold political parties together, to create an interest in public affairs among the people, and to give life and spirit to our political contests. Is this possible? Look at England, where, after the overthrow of one party and the coming into power of an-

other, scarcely more than sixty offices change hands. Look at Germany, where the victory of one and the defeat of another party involve no change in the administrative machinery at all. There are no spoils there, but are there no parties? Are there no party contests stirring the popular mind to its very depth? And now, in the freest of all countries, where the people in the largest sense are called to govern themselves, where the people owe so much to their democratic institutions and are said to be so proud of them, here there should not be patriotism and public spirit enough, here it should require the sordid allurements of spoils and plunder, to inspire the citizens with an active interest in their own affairs? Shame upon the slanderers who revile and blacken the American name with so infamous a charge! For it is a slander, wanton, foul and abominable. There was as much interest and ardor in our political contests as there ever has been anywhere in the world *before* the spoils of office were an element in American politics. There was more interest, more patriotic fervor, more self-sacrificing devotion, than anywhere and at any time in history, in the greatest political contest this country has ever seen—in the struggle for the salvation of the Union—in which hundreds of thousands freely offered their lives without any thought of spoil. And now it should be necessary to stimulate the patriotism of the American people with plunder? In the name of the national honor I repel the calumny.

If there has been anything calculated to chill patriotic zeal in public affairs, and to drive high-minded public spirit out of active political work, it was the intrusion of the spoils system that did it. It has injected the virus of mercenary motive into political endeavor. It has attracted to political organizations bands of greedy camp-followers, and enabled them to crowd out men of self-respect with their disgusting predominance. It has put the political boss, the leader of organized selfishness, in the place of the statesman. It has tended to make the political parties mere machines in the service of sordid greed. Instead of imparting healthy life and

spirit to our political contests, it has sought to degrade them to the level of scrambles for plunder. Take out that spoils element and there will still be parties, but they will not become mutual assurance companies of speculators and self-seekers. These parties will not be smaller, but they will be better. There will still be political workers, but they will be workers for public measures and policies, no longer the mercenary crowd working for loot. There will be leaders, but statesmanlike leaders of thought and endeavor—no longer leaders of hireling bands. There will be party contests, but contests of opinion fired with the enthusiasm for great principles—no longer miserable cat-fights for postoffices and collectorships. It is true the political trickster whose whole statesmanship consists in the art of political barter, and the patriot whose whole public spirit springs from a desire to be fed at the public crib—they will be sadly discouraged and chilled ; they may perhaps sullenly retire from the trade. But the real patriotism and statesmanship of the country, inspired with new zeal and hope, will move untold thousands to more than fill the gaps.

We hear it said that the "heelers" and the men of dirty work are necessary for party organization. Remove the spoils system, and you will see how superfluous they are. Their places will be taken by men who attend to organization with no less zeal and far more honorable purpose. This city groans under Tammany dominion, and Tammany asserts that its methods are necessary to hold an effective party organization together. Take away the spoils, put all the non-elective places, from the department commissioner to the street-sweeper, under sound and strict Civil Service rules, and there will be the end of Tammany. But the city will have other organizations for government, and then a government of public spirit, a government in which the best men will be proud to take part ; and it will at once appear how little the political ardor and activity of the Tammany kind was required to make New Yorkers happy. We hear it said that the possession and the use of the spoils of office

is needed to render a political party strong and successful. It is refreshing to see what the American people have of late come to think of the virtue imparted to a political party by the possession of the plunder. In 1884 the Republicans had all the offices, and they were defeated; in 1888 the Democrats had all the offices, and they were defeated; in 1892 the Republicans had all the offices, and they were defeated. And if in 1896 the Democrats should have all the offices again, that possession would certainly not save them from defeat.

As an element of party strength the possession of the offices has clearly proved a failure. The wise politician will seriously consider, in the light of recent history, whether it is not really an element of party weakness. How much stronger than a party gorged with spoil would that party be in the respect and confidence of the people that could truthfully say: "I was in control of the Government, and I have not selfishly abused my power. I have removed no meritorious public servant, although many of them were politically opposed to me. For every appointment I had to make, I have carefully selected the fittest man regardless of party. The interest of the people was my supreme consideration. I have faithfully treated the public offices as public trusts." Would not a party able to say this win for every discontented office-seeker ten recruits among our good citizens?

I say, therefore, that Civil Service Reform is not only right, not only Democratic, but also "good politics." It is good politics in a larger sense now than it has ever been before. The rapid repetition since 1884 of sweeping changes in the public service, with the scandals of absurdity and brutality inseparable from them, has stirred up a moral sensitiveness among good citizens all over the land, which is constantly increasing. The ravages committed by Mr. Clarkson in the postal service during Mr. Harrison's administration called forth much severer criticism than anything done by Mr. Stevenson before him; and fifty removals made by Mr. Maxwell now, whatever explanations may be given, cause a far more painful sensation than five hundred removals made

by Mr. Clarkson did four years ago. The national pride begins to be stung by a feeling of shame at the thought that abuses so glaring have been permitted to live so long in this mighty Republic of ours; and this feeling will be especially keen at this period of the World's Exposition—it might be called the world's meeting—upon our soil, when merchants, manufacturers, workmen, artists, men of science, men of letters, statesmen, publicists, thinkers of all nations visit this Republic. They will study not only our natural resources, our material development and the productions of our industries, but the working of our political institutions, our morals, our customs, our manners, our ways of thinking, all the fruits of our civilization. The patriotic American, mindful of the honor of his country, asks himself with anxious interest how the spectacle of the passage of our national Government from the control of one party to that of another will strike these keen observers, and how their experiences, communicated to the world, will affect the standing of this Republic in the opinion of civilized mankind.

Imagine such men to go to Washington in order to look into the machinery of what may without exaggeration in some respects be called the greatest, and certainly the freest government on earth—the one which ought to be the model government of the world. Imagine them to find the national capital occupied by eager crowds clamoring for the public offices as the hireling soldiery of past centuries may have clamored for the booty of a town taken by assault. Imagine them to find the President of the United States, the greatest elected officer in the world, literally besieged by the throng of office-hunters demanding his instant attention. Imagine them to see the President, as well as the Secretary of the Treasury, at a moment when the financial interests of this people of sixty-five millions are drifting into the perils of a great crisis, obliged to confess that the place-hunting invasion does not leave the highest officers of the Government time quietly to study the pressing dangers of the situation and the means to avert them. Im-

agine the observers to inquire into the "claims" of the impetuous office-hunters, and to find in an overwhelming majority of cases mere party service urged as their only title to public employment, coupled with an impatient demand that all officers of different politics be instantly ousted to make room for the victors. Imagine them to see Senators and Representatives, the law-makers of the Republic, vehemently pressing such action. Imagine them to take up their daily papers and to find in one of them a despatch announcing that yesterday 150 new postmasters were appointed, among them fifty in the place of persons removed, mostly because they have been in office four years, just long enough to make them experienced and useful postmasters; in another paper a jubilant outcry that the "headsman" in Washington is vigorously swinging his axe and making the heads fly; and in still another a threatening growl at the slowness with which the executioner is doing his work, and which is chilling the enthusiasm of the party. Imagine these bedlam scenes to be the pictures these observers would carry home with them of American practical sense, of the American development of democratic institutions, of the fruits of American civilization, of the character of this great Republic of ours, which we proudly think should be in all things an elevating example, a guiding star to all nations on earth!

The shame of the fact that the spoils system, of which all this is but the natural outgrowth, has prevailed among us for more than half a century, we cannot hide from the searching eyes of mankind—just as in times gone by we could not hide the hideous blot of slavery. Nor is the existing evil of less moment than that which we have overcome. We find it recorded that a few days after the fall of Richmond, Abraham Lincoln pointed out to a friend the crowd of office-seekers besieging his door, and mournfully said: "Look at this. Now we have conquered the rebellion; but here you see something that may become more dangerous to this Republic than the rebellion itself." But as we overcame slavery and the rebellion, so the American people can again furnish

the proof that, however strongly an evil may be entrenched in power and in habit, they are, in the exercise of their democratic government, wise enough, patriotic enough and vigorous enough to deal with it. And nothing would redound more to the glory of this Republic than such a demonstration now, when, more than ever, it is the observed of all observers.

When thinking of the means to abolish the spoils system, our eyes turn not unnaturally to the man whom the people recently put at the head of the national Government. He has the power to strike a decisive blow; he has the opportunity, and it would be an offence to doubt that he has the will. He knows, as we know, that the people put him where he is because he was trusted to be opposed to the vicious methods which so long have poisoned our political life. He was believed to be able and willing to secure to the people not merely a smaller measure, but the opposite of the tyrannous and demoralizing spoils politics, of which they are tired. He owes his elevation to the hope that his Administration would be different from most of those which preceded it, not merely in degree, but in kind. We, who are an organization of devoted volunteers in the struggle for this cause, may without presumption speak to him and say: "You are beset by politicians great and small who, for their own advantage, seek to drive you from your noblest purposes. Tell them once for all that the President of the United States, as you understand his duty, has in the use of his power only one interest to serve, and that is the common welfare. You have told us that it is very doubtful whether our Government could survive the strain of a continuance of the spoils system. Tell the spoils-seekers that it is the sacred duty of the President of the United States to guard the Government against this perilous strain, that he has no right to continue it, and that, therefore, the distribution of offices as party spoils must cease altogether. You have told us that the use of offices as rewards for partisan activity involves 'a misappropriation of the public funds.' Tell them that the President of the United States has no right to misappropriate

the public funds, no right to increase the cost of the Government and the burdens of the people, by displacing efficient public servants because they belong to the opposite party, and by filling the places with inexperienced and therefore expensive men of his own. Tell them this with decision and firmness, and soon the wild scramble will cease which harasses you and your aids beyond endurance, almost blocking the wheels of the Government and exposing us to the scoffs of civilized men. Let all concerned well understand that only the public interest will be served and no spoils are to be had while you are President, and you will find Congress more willing than it ever has been to regulate the service permanently by rational legislation. It may be said that by doing this you will offend many politicians. So you will. You will offend the same men whom you have offended many times before, and whose hostility has been your glory and strength. And they will be equally offended if you do only half of it. But by doing the whole, you will win the support and the lasting gratitude of a patriotic people. No living man has more reason than you to know that the people can be trusted, that as to all questions of political morals they are far in advance of the professional politicians, and that they are capable of enforcing their will. If they were not, then you would not be where you are. We read of able and brave men in history whose achievements remained crude and commonplace, while a little more of bold decision at the moment of great opportunity would have made them heroes and placed them among the immortals. Yours is the opportunity of a generation. It is an enviable opportunity, worthy of the noblest, the most patriotic ambition. As Abraham Lincoln stands in our annals as the liberator of the slave, you may stand there, if you will, as the regenerator of our political life."

Members of the League, we look forward to the year before us with high hopes. May we be permitted, when we meet again, to rejoice over accomplished results.



## MEETING OF THE LEAGUE.

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CITY CLUB PARLORS, April 26, 1893, 10.30 A. M.

The chairman of the executive committee opened the meeting and announced the first business to be the election of a president for the ensuing year.

Mr. Bonaparte nominated Mr. Schurz, whereupon Mr. Schurz called Mr. Bonaparte to the chair and retired. Mr. Parrish moved that the nominations be closed and that the secretary be directed to deposit one ballot as the vote of the League for Carl Schurz as president. The secretary announced that he had done so, and the chair appointed Messrs. Potts and Watson a committee to inform Mr. Schurz of his election.

Mr. Schurz accepted the office of president in a brief address, alluding feelingly to the responsibility of succeeding to the post held so long and honorably by George William Curtis, and thanking the League for the trust it had reposed in him.

On the call for nominations for vice-presidents, it was moved that the present vice-presidents, Charles Francis Adams of Boston, Henry Hitchcock of St. Louis, Henry C. Lea of Philadelphia, John Jay, Augustus R. Macdonough and Rt. Rev. Henry C. Potter of New York, Franklin MacVeagh of Chicago, Rt. Rev. Stephen N. Ryan of Buffalo and Severn Teackle Wallis of Baltimore, be reelected, and that the secretary be directed to cast a single ballot as the vote of the League. The secretary cast the ballot and the gentlemen named were declared elected.

The report of the treasurer, printed herein, was read, showing a net balance to the credit of the League of \$1,116.23. Messrs. Burt and Macdonough were appointed an auditing committee.

Papers prepared at the request of the chairman of the executive committee, printed in full in these "Pro-

ceedings," were read by Mr. Charles J. Bonaparte and Mr. William Dudley Foulke. On motion of Mr. Wheeler, Mr. Charles Noble Gregory of Madison, Wisconsin, was requested to read before the League a paper previously prepared by him on "The Corrupt Use of Money in Elections, and Laws to Prevent It."

Mr. Gregory responded by reading the paper.

On motion of Mr. Foulke it was directed that a synopsis of the Corrupt Practices Act recently enacted in Missouri, and drafted and promoted by the Civil Service Reform Association of Missouri, be prepared for insertion in the published proceedings of this meeting.

On motion the thanks of the League were extended to Messrs. Bonaparte and Foulke and to Mr. Gregory for the preparation of the interesting papers read.

On motion the meeting adjourned, to reconvene at 2.30 P. M.

*Attest:*

WILLIAM POTTS. *Secretary.*

CITY CLUB PARLORS, April 26, 1893, 2.30 P. M.

The president took the chair.

The report of the auditing committee appointed at the morning session upon the annual report of the treasurer, was read and ordered on file.

The president called for the report of the committee on resolutions, and Mr. Howe, for the committee, read the resolutions prepared.

On motion of Mr. Eaton they were reread and considered seriatim, and after some modification adopted in the following form:

Since its last annual meeting, the League has been called upon to confront well-nigh irreparable misfortune in the death of George William Curtis, its president since its formation, and the one to whom, more than all others, it has always looked for words of wisdom and encouragement. The Civil Service Reform League condoles with the nation upon the loss of this illustrious citizen, who was always foremost in good works—a tower of strength on the side of all who fought for the promotion

of better government. We of the League, who have been so often cheered by his gracious presence, so often charmed by his eloquent speech, bring a more poignant and personal grief to augment our sense of public bereavement.

On the 4th of March last, the Democratic party again took charge of the national Government. The platform upon which the people entrusted it with power declared that public office was a public trust, and they have a right to expect the fulfillment of this assurance by the present Administration. Public offices cannot be used as a reward for party services, but should be bestowed, without other consideration, upon those best fitted to administer them.

The platform reaffirmed the declaration of the Democratic convention of 1876 for the Reform of the Civil Service and called for the honest enforcement of all laws regulating the same. The people therefore have the right to expect not only that the Civil Service Commission shall be composed wholly of men of courage, and devoted to this Reform, but that the heads of Departments and bureaus, and chiefs of divisions, as well as all officers of the Department of Justice, shall be impartial and vigilant in prosecuting violators of the Law and in otherwise promoting its efficiency.

The platform of 1876 declares that the dispensing of patronage should neither be a tax upon the time of our public men nor the instrument of their ambition. This declaration implies the abolition of Congressional patronage, and we look to the President to see that the system by which offices are distributed among Congressmen and by them are portioned among their political friends and supporters shall entirely cease.

These declarations further tell us that the efficient, economical conduct of the Government business is not possible if the Civil Service be subject to change at every election. We therefore are warranted in expecting that under this Administration there will be no general change in the offices ; and the declaration that such places should be posts of honor, assigned for proved competency and held for fidelity in the public employ, assures us that there will be no removals of faithful and efficient public servants, no matter what may have been the term of their service. We ask of the President the fulfillment of this assurance.

The President himself has in frequent public utterances expli-

citly declared his conviction that the system which distributes public position purely as the reward for partisan service threatens utterly to demoralize our political life, puts our Government to a dangerous strain, and undermines the working of our free institutions. Declarations so clear and emphatic justify the belief that he will use his whole power to secure the extension of the Civil Service Law to all branches of the service to which it is applicable and to apply its principles likewise to all executive appointments.

As it is the evident duty of the President to remove unfaithful or inefficient public servants and bring to justice offenders against the laws of the United States, the League demands the dismissal of every federal officer who has failed to obey in letter and spirit the Civil Service Law, and also demands the effective prosecution of all who have violated its penal provisions. And it expresses its hearty appreciation of the zeal and energy of the Civil Service Commission in exposing abuses and crimes among unworthy officers during the last Presidential campaign.

The Civil Service Commission has performed its duties in a manner which deserves and has the approval of the country. The League declares that Congress, in refusing to appropriate sufficient funds to provide for the necessary examinations, did not represent the sentiment of the people, and it earnestly commends the action of the Commission in providing, nevertheless, for immediate examinations in the newly classified free-delivery postoffices. And as, four years ago, the League condemned the late Administration for taking advantage of a brief delay in the preparation of eligible lists to sweep hundreds of employees out of the Railway Mail Service and fill their places with partisans, so now the League would regard a like change in the newly classified offices an evident evasion of the Law and deserving of the like condemnation.

While we fully recognize that the absolute power of removal must be vested in the appointing power, subject only to a sound discretion, the system of making removals upon secret charges or specified acts preferred by unknown accusers, without opportunity for explanation or denial, is inquisitorial in its character, unjust in its results, and, like the spoils system itself, repugnant to the spirit of American institutions.

Fourth class postoffices as prizes for political service have long

been and still are the treasured fields of the spoilsman, and since the adoption of the Civil Service Law appointments of fourth-class postmasters have constituted the most widely advertised as well as the most scandalous exhibition of his activity. Arbitrary removals in the postal service for political reasons alone impose upon the country the delay and expense which necessarily results from replacing efficiency and experience by ignorance and inexperience.

The unequivocal utterances of President Cleveland justly raised the hopes of all who believed in Civil Service Reform. It is therefore with regret that the League must record that the system of allotment of fourth-class postmasters as the prizes of political service has not been discontinued, and it hopes that a method may be adopted in the near future by which such appointments and removals in this, the most numerous class of officeholders, may be made in accordance with the principles of Civil Service Reform.

The League again commends the bills introduced by the Hon. Sherman Hoar, providing that all postmasters should be removed only for cause stated, and by the Hon. Henry Cabot Lodge, providing that fourth-class postmasters should be appointed without regard to political considerations.

The position of chief of division should be the reward of the under-employee who in open competition shows himself best fitted for it. It is an injustice to deprive him of this legitimate recompense of skill and faithful service; and this injustice is peculiarly aggravated when the place is given to another who has no special fitness and whose chief claim is personal or political influence. Promotion by competition, in such case, is also pre-eminently the due of the people, because it secures the best services. Such positions in the Departments at Washington and in offices throughout the country should, therefore, be placed within the classified system.

The League recognizes that the evils and frauds of our pension system are a direct result of the use of the public treasury and the public offices for partisan purposes. There will be no genuine reform until this coercing and corrupt influence is removed. The League therefore declares that sweeping removals of pension examiners and the substitution of other partisans and followers

of Congressmen would be but a continuation of former maladministration.

The opportunities of workingmen to earn a living should not depend upon the favor of politicians. They should have the same chance for employment and retention upon merit by the Government that they have in private occupation. The labor service system already enforced in Massachusetts and in the navy yards accomplishes this object in a manner singularly successful; and it should be incorporated throughout the federal service.

We commend the policy of Secretary Herbert in continuing the rules which were introduced in the navy yards by Secretary Tracy. The League has been informed that a report recommending the permanent adoption of these regulations and the placing of all navy yard employees under the jurisdiction of the Civil Service Commission is now before the executive, having been left as unfinished business by the last Administration. The League requests the President's approval of this report of the former Secretary of the Navy.

The League records its emphatic condemnation of any suggestion that the President's power of appointment to office should be used to affect the legislative action of Congress.

We reiterate our demand that the law limiting the tenure of many offices to four years, be repealed. This law is utterly vicious in principle as well as in its practical effects. It furnishes a pretext for depriving the service of officers whom their experience has made especially efficient and valuable, and thus keeps it in perpetual unrest. In recognizing, by implication, the propriety of quadrennial changes in the offices of the Government, it is an incitement to periodical "clean sweeps" and to a perpetuation of all the demoralizing abuses of the spoils system. Merely to permit meritorious officers to serve out their terms and then to dismiss them for the purpose of making room for others, may be an improvement upon more brutal practices formerly prevailing, but it is not Reform. In every case of a change of party in power, it will result in a "clean sweep," slowly executed, but a clean sweep for all that, with all its demoralizing consequences. It carries the evidence of its own inconsistency and absurdity on its face. A President continuing a meritorious officer belonging to the opposite party in place, thereby admits that the public interest is served by such con-

tinuance, for, if it were not, the President would be bound to remove him for cause. He admits also that the public interest does not require that all the officers of the Government should be of the same political party as the Administration. If meritorious officers are discharged after the expiration of the four-years term in spite of this admission, it is consequently done in open disregard of the public interest.

Mr. Estes offered the following resolution relative to the securing of a fitting memorial to the late president of the League, George William Curtis:

*Resolved:* That a committee of seven, with power to add to its numbers, and of which the president of the League shall be a member ex-officio, shall be appointed by the chair to take into consideration the expediency of organizing an association, or of coöperating with such an association if one already exists, for the erection of a national memorial to the memory of George William Curtis, and, if it deem it wise to do so, to take the necessary steps to create such an association, and to organize a movement to raise the funds necessary for such a memorial and to decide upon its form and location.

The president appointed as such committee Messrs. Dana Estes, Charles J. Bonaparte, Henry Villard, William Dudley Foulke, Everett P. Wheeler, Richard Henry Dana and William A. Aiken.

The following was offered by Mr. Cary and unanimously adopted:

*Resolved:* That the address of Mr. Schurz, the papers read by Mr. Bonaparte and Mr. Foulke, and the proceedings of the League be published in GOOD GOVERNMENT and, under the direction of the publication committee, in pamphlet form for general distribution.

Mr. Swift offered the following, which was adopted unanimously:

*Resolved:* That the President of the League appoint a committee of three, of which he shall be chairman, to proceed to Washington and, in such manner as they shall deem best, urge upon the President and the members of the Cabinet, practicable measures for the advancement of the Reform of the Civil Service, and to the end that the patronage system may be entirely disused.

The following, offered by Mr. Eaton, was also adopted:

*Resolved:* That we call upon members of Congress to allow the President that liberty which the Constitution contemplates

he should have, to make nominations and appointments on the basis of merit and without solicitation or coercion from members of the legislative department.

Mr. Rose, for the committee on political assessments during the last Presidential campaign, presented and read a report of the investigations of the committee, giving considerable data regarding the violations of the Law officially reported and now under consideration by the Department of Justice.

The assistant secretary, for the committee appointed to collect and report the facts in regard to the active interference of federal officeholders in primary meetings, conventions and elections during the last three years, stated that one thousand copies of the report submitted under date of December 1, 1892, had been printed in pamphlet form and that steps would be taken for their proper distribution.

Mr. Loomis of Buffalo offered a resolution reciting the fact of recent loss to the State Civil Service system in New York by numerous changes in the grading of employees brought about by executive act, and expressing strong disapproval of the course taken by Governor Flower.

After some discussion the matter was referred with power to the New York and Buffalo Associations.

A written report was presented from Mr. J. Hemsley Johnson, chairman of the committee appointed at the last annual meeting to print and distribute the address of George William Curtis delivered at that time, stating that fifteen thousand copies of the address had been carefully circulated, the work being largely facilitated by the personal assistance of Mr. Herbert Welsh.

Mr. Watson, for the committee on circulation of literature among workingmen's societies, reported the preparation and distribution of a pamphlet prepared for this purpose, entitled "The Workingman and Civil Service Reform: What Can He Do About It?" and the partly favorable result of correspondence had by him with leaders of labor organizations on this subject.

The committee was on motion authorized to expend \$250 in further extending this work.



A report was submitted by Colonel Burt for the committee on organization of local associations, stating the discussion of various means of inducing organization of this sort by the members of the committee, and their conclusion that to locate corresponding secretaries in large centres would be at present the most practical method of extending the work.

The report was accepted and the secretary, on motion, authorized to provide for the additional office service that may be needed in the successful carrying out of this plan and the extension generally of the work of the League.

Mr. Wheeler moved that the thanks of the League be extended to the officers and members of the City Club for their kindly courtesy in giving the use of the club house for the purposes of this meeting. The motion was unanimously carried.

On motion of Mr. Rose the thanks of the League were also tendered to the New York and Brooklyn Associations for their generous hospitality.

Mr. Potts, for the publication committee, reported the highly successful experience of GOOD GOVERNMENT during the first year of its publication, and, on motion, the meeting then adjourned.

*Attest:*

WILLIAM POTTS, *Secretary.*

Among those present with more or less regularity during the sessions of the League were the following:

Boston, Mass.—Arthur Hobart, John Ritchie, Clemens Herschel and Alfred L. Ripley.

Brookline, Mass.—Dana Estes.

Brooklyn, N. Y.—William G. Low, William Potts, F. L. Partridge.

Buffalo, N. Y.—Frank M. Loomis, Ansley Wilcox, Thomas Cary, John B. Olmsted, Edward R. Rice and F. F. Williams.

Baltimore, Md.—Charles J. Bonaparte, John C. Rose, Francis White, Joshua Levering, Rev. William

- Kirkus, William Reynolds, Daniel Miller, A. J. Gosman, Edgar G. Miller, W. J. Dickey, Samuel Theobald, B. P. Moore, Clayton C. Hall, Thomas W. Hall, Joseph Pollard, Summerfield Baldwin and D. L. Mason, George A. Pope.
- Cambridge, Mass.—Morrill Wyman, Jr., Archibald M. Howe, W. W. Vaughan, Jabez Fox.
- Chicago, Ill.—D. M. Lord.
- Cincinnati, O.—C. B. Wilby.
- Indiana.—William Dudley Foulke and Lucius B. Swift.
- Ithaca, N. Y.—De Forest Van Vliet.
- Madison, Wis.—Charles Noble Gregory.
- New York City—Carl Schurz, Everett P. Wheeler, Edward Cary, Silas W. Burt, Charles Collins, A. R. Macdonough, Horace E. Deming, Dorman B. Eaton, Charles W. Watson, Jacob F. Miller, George R. Bishop, R. S. Minturn, Seth S. Terry, George McAneny, Jr., W. S. Collins, George Haven Putnam, Horace White, Richard Watson Gilder, Dr. W. H. Thompson, F. W. Holls, S. H. Ordway, A. C. Bernheim, F. W. Whittridge, S. P. Avery, Henry T. Terry, C. G. Kidder.
- New Haven, Conn.—Prof. H. W. Farnam.
- Norwich, Conn.—Gen. W. A. Aiken.
- Philadelphia, Pa.—Herbert Welsh, Joseph Parrish, J. J. Pinkerton, Edward S. Sayres, J. G. Francis, E. J. James, Prof. Joseph French Johnson, Jacob Dowler, E. P. Gould, J. S. Rosengarten.
- Rochester, N. Y.—Porter Farley.
- Virginia.—Virginius Newton.
- Washington, D. C.—Francis E. Leupp.
- West Newton, Mass.—James P. Tolman.

## TREASURER'S ANNUAL STATEMENT.

Following is the annual statement of the treasurer of the National Civil Service Reform League:

Balance for Statement April 30, 1892 ----- \$1,142.36

### *Receipts:*

Adv. on acct. of GOOD GOVERNMENT-----	\$1,400.00	
On acct. of Guarantee-----	741.20	
Contributions from Asso'ns-----	270.20	
Subscriptions-----	155.00	
Documents sold-----	59.09	
Interest-----	33.61	
Ret'd by Com. on Activity of Officeholders-----	45.84	
"    Com. on Distribution of President's Address-----	75.00	
	<u>2,779.94</u>	
		\$3,922.30

### *Disbursements:*

Ret'd acct. adv. for GOOD GOVERNMENT-----	\$200.00	
Pd. acct. GOOD GOVERNMENT-----	615.74	
Printing bills-----	512.80	
Com. on Activity of Officeholders-----	112.10	
Rent of Meeting Room and Office-----	110.00	
Petty Expenses-----	55.43	
	<u>1,606 07</u>	
Balance on hand-----		\$2,316.23
Deduct Loan-----		<u>1,200.00</u>
Net Balance-----		\$1,116.23

E. & O. E.,  
WILLIAM POTTS,  
Treasurer.

New York, April 25, 1893.

## THE USE OF PATRONAGE TO INFLUENCE LEGISLATION.

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ADDRESS OF CHARLES J. BONAPARTE.

The President of the United States is a legislative officer. He is required by the Constitution, he was expected and intended by its framers, to aid in making the laws he executes; to this end he is given powers, in a measure atrophied by disuse, which, wielded by a true leader of free men, would profoundly affect, if they did not control, the work of Congress. It may be well to briefly consider what are his means of legitimate influence before dealing with the special subject of my paper, for I believe that, while many good citizens are now troubled lest Congress refuse the President practical support for a policy which the people endorsed by his choice, comparatively few realize that such anxiety questions his statesmanship no less than the enlightenment and patriotism of Senators and Representatives.

I need not dwell upon the more familiar feature of the President's legislative power; everybody knows that he has "power, by and with the consent of the Senate, to make treaties"; although everybody does not know, or, at least, constantly remember, that treaties are laws and may over-ride and repeal other laws enacted by Congress. In more than one country the principles professed by our tariff-reformers were first embodied in treaties of commerce for the very purpose of thus eluding a hostile Chamber. All have heard of his right of veto, but all have not reflected that this constitutes him a standing "committee of conference," wherewith the author of every proposed law must deal, or how seriously and positively this fact may affect the course of legislation; the *tribunicia potestas* was a prime factor in shaping the old Roman polity.

The President, however, has further legislative duties and is armed with the authority these imply. "He may . . . convene both houses or either of them." If Congress tries to run away from its work, to hide itself from public opinion, he can chain it to its post. And he not only *may*, but "*shall* from time to time give to the Congress information of the state of the Union, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient." In the stormy days of Andrew Johnson a Senator once proposed that a message from the President be not read; a night's reflection, however, convinced everyone that, when he chooses to talk, Congress is bound to listen. Indeed, to refuse him a formal hearing would be to hand him a trumpet; he speaks over the heads of the people's other servants to their and his common master; if they stuff their ears with cotton, that master will be the more certain to listen, the more ready to act.

The value of such a privilege to a President depends on the President himself. A critic of the constitution of the German Empire, writing when this was newly framed, said it ought to have provided that the Chancellor should always be a man of genius and never grow old or fall ill. Our fathers were less exacting, but in the Presidency they created a place far too big, as they conceived and shaped it, to be filled by a little man. They foresaw that its incumbent might be great enough to be dangerous, they did not think of him as small enough to be contemptible. Therefore the trust committed to him and the means granted him to fulfill this trust are not devised on the hypothesis of his own insignificance. If he has no thoughts worth the uttering, or if neither he nor any of his chosen advisers can clothe what thoughts he has in language worth the reading, then it is a matter of little moment that he is ever entitled to the country's ear when he sees fit to claim this. It is no great boon to a dumb man that we always recognize his right to the floor. But for a President who has something to say and can, either himself or through a fitting mouthpiece, so say it that his countrymen will

stop to hear him, this privilege has an enormous value. He can lay bare to public scrutiny in any exigency what he would have the people know; he can in any controversy place his adversaries on the defensive and summon them with unequaled authority to the bar of public opinion. When he speaks he compels a hostile Congress to answer him, and the answer, whether given by a hundred orators whose discordant words the country will have no time to heed, or in the cumbrous pronouncements of large assemblies, is of necessity far less effective than his speech. If, wielding these weapons, a President cannot so awaken and guide public opinion that even an unwilling Congress must give the form of law to his policy, this shows either that his policy is not the people's or that he is unfit for his place. Should he ask indulgence for irregular and unworthy means employed to the same end, because otherwise he had failed, he stands as a lawyer who, for lack of skill, learning and eloquence to gain his cause, has bribed the jury; and, indeed, bribery in a form more than ordinarily repulsive and noxious has been too often the resource of helpless mediocrity struggling with the responsibilities of his mission.

The President, as first servant of the people, chooses, or ought to choose, an immense number of under-servants to help him in his work. Their offices no more belong to him than does the furniture of the White House; and he has as little right, either in law or morals, to place one at the disposal of a complaisant Congressman as to reward the latter for his vote with a piano or a painting for which the Treasury has paid. Bishop Latimer called bribery "a princely kind of thieving"; it may have seemed so in his day, but I, at least, see little room for the adjective, when the President of the United States uses his patronage as a huge corruption fund to repay official perjury and breach of public trust in the national legislature.

The nature of the legislation obtained is altogether beside the question. Lord Bacon professed to have never decided any cause against his judgment of its merits, al-

though he had often exacted pay for his decisions, but posterity has ratified the finding of his judges that this fact—if fact it were—in no wise lightened his guilt. The Southern or Western Congressman who believes in free silver or inconvertible greenbacks or agricultural “subtreasuries,” is, to my thinking, foolish or ignorant, or both, but he may be an honest man; if, while so believing, he votes for the best law which the most experienced financier can devise to restore a sound currency, because, by thus voting, he will get a foreign mission for his brother-in-law or a consulate for his invalid nephew or a postoffice for his best “worker,” then I pronounce him a scoundrel, and those who pay him the price of his infamy no whit better than himself.

There is one feature about this beggarly business which makes it superlatively mean. The plaintiffs or defendants who greased the itching palms of the Lord Chancellor in Bacon’s days did so out of their own pockets. What they gave him may have been unfairly earned or wrongfully withheld, but it was at least formally their own; they were accessories to his breach of trust, but were not themselves unjust stewards. When, however, a President distributes appointments in return for legislation, this costs him personally nothing but his self-respect and the esteem of good men; he is no less bribed than is the Senator or Representative with whom he bargains; each of them buys up the other. For one servant to pay another to betray the confidence of their master is sufficiently shameful; that he should do this with the talents that very master has placed in his keeping deepens to ink the shade of his perfidy.

This abuse is no less dangerous than odious. The President called for by the Constitution is well-nigh omnipotent in legislation when he inspires and voices public opinion, but as nearly powerless when this no longer sustains him. He ensures the constant supremacy of the whole country over local prejudices or interests; he can do little or nothing to thwart its will. He is a demagogue in the first and best sense of the word; by him the people can be always led, but never driven.

And if he is sternly and vigilantly limited to his lawful instruments of agitation and influence, he can only—therefore he will—be such a man as can handle these. A nonentity or worse could never reach the chair that was fashioned for and first filled by Washington.

But something much worse than a nonentity will serve to swap off pounds of patronage for yards of law-making ; for this occupation “ statesmen ” who tamper with bills and choose for judges purloiners of election returns have a right of preëmption, if not a patent, which those of another type should not seek to infringe. Such methods may seem at times to advance public welfare ; England appeared to owe many years of peace and comparative prosperity to the systematic corruption of Walpole ; but no free people can long tolerate them and remain long free. When the executive can say of the legislature truly and safely, as the lady said of her hair, “ It is my own, for I have paid for it,” although not, as she added, “ with my own money,” a system of legal checks and balances, however elaborate, may serve to disguise but will not qualify a practical autocracy. The forms of a republic lasted at Rome long after Augustus, and subsist now with much parade throughout Spanish America.

Against this peril the founders of our Government sought to safeguard by constitutional provisions which suffice only to prove their solicitude. That “ No Senator or Representative shall, during the time for which he was elected, be appointed to any civil office under the Authority of the United States, which shall have been created, or the Emoluments whereof shall have been increased during such time ; and no Person holding any office under the United States shall be a Member of either House during his continuance in office,” is of little avail ; that the President can appoint only “ by and with the advice and consent of the Senate ” is, for this purpose, of less than none. Our real protectors are the strong common sense and sturdy honesty of the American people. Some well-meaning persons may from time to time persuade themselves that to secure good laws



when these seem sorely needed the President can be forgiven a prostitution of his constitutional powers, a violation of his oath of office. I believe the people can, and, if need be, will be made to see that as well might a woman sell her chastity to give the profits in alms.

The strangers who this year throng our shores may perhaps report on their return home that they found in Chicago, with other exhibits of our civilization, a specimen of the model American Mayor; such of them as pass through Albany can tell their fellow-countrymen what manner of men Triumphant Democracy delights to honor in the rulers of our greatest State. Let us hope, however, that they may not find the fair image of popular government

“ . . . . moulded into calm completeness ”

by an auction-booth at Washington where Senators and Representatives peddle out votes for places with a President who peddles out places for votes.

## PLATFORMS AND PROMISES.

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ADDRESS OF WILLIAM DUDLEY FOULKE.

When Deacon Smith said to Deacon Jones, "You don't suppose, Deacon, that those little stories, sort of lies like, which you and I *tell in the way of trade* will ever be counted against us in the great day of judgment?" he gave utterance to a sentiment which common opinion has attributed to most of the professors of statesmanship from the time of Machiavelli down to the days of John Wanamaker.

Personally, some of these men do what they promise. But politically, repudiation of their word is not to be reckoned against them in the great day. And so it has come to pass that a political platform representing the aggregate promises of a great party is held to be as untrustworthy as an epitaph; and that a man whom you could safely leave alone with a bushel of uncounted gold pieces in the dark, can by no means be relied upon not to turn much of his official power and influence to the private gain of his party and perhaps of himself.

It is the purpose of this paper to consider the declarations of the two great parties and their candidates, as well as some of the more recent discrepancies between promise and performance in regard to Civil Service Reform.

The Reform itself, at least so far as the competitive system is concerned, is of comparatively recent origin. Little was known of it in America until some time after the war. The Republican platform of 1864 declared: "We regard as worthy of public confidence and official trust those only who cordially endorse the principles proclaimed in these resolutions." None but Republicans must be appointed to office. There was no distinction between political and non-political place. But,

in considering the platform, the standards of to-day cannot be applied. The time was critical. The principle was that of the old command: "Put none but Americans on guard to-night." A non-partisan Civil Service was an unknown thing. The Democratic platform said nothing on the subject. The issues were quite foreign to this Reform.

In the Grant and Seymour campaign of 1868, the Democracy demanded a reform of abuses, the expulsion of corrupt men and the abrogation of useless offices, and denounced Congress for stripping the President of his constitutional power of appointment even of members of his own Cabinet.

The Republicans, on the other hand, attacked President Johnson for turning the public patronage into an engine of wholesale corruption. The declarations were general in character and had no reference to what is now known as Civil Service Reform.

But near the close of President Grant's first term there was a trial, in a limited way, of the merit system of examination. By reason of the imperfect support given to the Reform, and of the damaging examples of official infidelity on the part of some of those connected with the Administration, it made little progress.

In the Grant and Greeley campaign of 1872, the abuses of administration had become more serious. The Democratic platform waxed eloquent in denunciation of them, saying :

The Civil Service of the Government has become a mere instrument of partisan tyranny and personal ambition, and an object of selfish greed. It is a scandal and reproach upon free institutions and breeds a demoralization dangerous to the perpetuity of republican government. We therefore regard a thorough Reform of the Civil Service as one of the most pressing necessities of the hour ; that honesty, capacity and fidelity constitute the only valid claim to public employment, that the offices of the Government cease to be a matter of arbitrary favoritism and patronage and that public station again become a post of honor. To this end it is imperatively required that no President shall be a candidate for reelection.

This declaration is quite comprehensive. If it were fully carried out there would be an excellent Civil Ser-

vice. But no specific means except the one-term limitation was suggested for its accomplishment. The Reform was still to be brought about by the vague, spasmodic and ephemeral process of turning bad men out and putting good men in their places—a thing which all have favored from the dawn of history but which few have ever seen accomplished.

The Republican platform was more specific. It declared:

Any system of Civil Service Reform in which the subordinate positions of the Government are considered rewards for mere party zeal is fatally demoralizing, and we therefore favor a reform of the system by laws which shall abolish the evils of patronage and make honesty, efficiency and fidelity the essential qualifications for public position without practically creating a life tenure of office.

The Republican platform went beyond the Democratic. This Reform was to be brought about by a general law. That was a great step. Yet still the suggestion was far from complete. What kind of a law was this to be? How should honesty, efficiency and fidelity be made the essential qualifications for public position? The platform does not inform us. Such a law would be immensely desirable, but how should the bill be drawn?

During the next four years there was another decided advance. The first Civil Service Commission appointed by President Grant, of which George William Curtis was the distinguished leader, reported the satisfactory results of the competitive system so far as it had been tried. In 1874 the President transmitted this report to Congress with favorable comments, but Congress refused an appropriation. Public sentiment, however, had grown, and in the Tilden and Hayes campaign of 1876 the Democratic platform made a distinct declaration against a clean sweep, against the appointment of men for mere party considerations, against the dispensing of patronage for political purposes. These resolutions—which will be considered hereafter—derive additional importance from the fact that they were reiterated in the platform of last year and constitute in great measure

the standard of duty established for the present Administration.

The Republican platform of 1876 lagged far behind. It merely said :

We rejoice in the quickened conscience of the people concerning political affairs, and will hold all public officers to a rigid responsibility and engage that the prosecution and punishment of all who betray official trusts shall be speedy, thorough and unsparing.

Here was no rule of appointment, no exclusion of political considerations—nothing but a promise to prosecute those who violate the criminal law.

But during the administration of President Hayes, Mr. Dorman B. Eaton presented his admirable report upon the history of the Civil Service in Great Britain. The Jay Commission had shown the advantages of the system in the New York custom-house. Mr. James had established the reform in the New York postoffice.

In 1880—the Garfield and Hancock campaign—the Democratic platform promised a thorough Reform of the Civil Service without, however, stating what that was to be.

The Republican platform was more definite. The convention adopted the declaration of President Hayes that the Reform of the Civil Service should be thorough, radical and complete.

To this end it demands the coöperation of the legislative with the executive department of the Government, and that Congress shall so legislate that fitness ascertained by proper practical tests shall admit to the public service.

This declaration acquires additional meaning from the fact that the particular Reform to which President Hayes referred was the one providing for a Civil Service Commission and for competitive examinations. The demand for the coöperation of the legislature meant that the classified system should be established by law, and it was in pursuance of this platform that the federal Civil Service Act was passed during the following Presidential term.

But it is with the platforms and promises of candidates

since that time that we have principally to deal to-day.

In 1884 the classified system had just been established. In the Republican convention of that year was the greatest of all Civil Service Reformers, Mr. George William Curtis. To his hand was entrusted the drafting of the resolution. From his skillful pen there came the fullest, completest and most definite declaration upon this subject which has ever found place in any political platform :

The Reform of the Civil Service, auspiciously begun under a Republican Administration, should be completed by the further extension of the Reform system, already established by law, to all grades of the service to which it is applicable. The spirit and purpose of Reform should be observed in all executive appointments. All laws at variance with the objects of existing Reform legislation should be repealed, to the end that the dangers to free institutions which lurk in the power of official patronage may be wisely and effectively avoided.

Here there was nothing left out and there was no ambiguity. It was the particular Reform begun by the federal Civil Service Law which should be thus extended. The language was so certain that it would not be difficult for an honest and candid man to determine by fair and just construction what it meant in any given case, either within the classified service or elsewhere.

The Democratic platform of 1884, on the other hand, was distinctly weaker than several of its predecessors. All that it said was, "We favor honest Civil Service Reform." Now, Civil Service Reform with an adjective is an object of suspicion. The qualification indicates something different from the thing already set on foot. There is no spoilsman, no party hack, who does not vociferously proclaim his devotion to *honest* Civil Service Reform, *real* Civil Service Reform, *genuine* Civil Service Reform—indeed, any kind of a variation from the unqualified thing to which this National League is devoted. That single phrase was all that the new Democratic President could adduce in support of his efforts.

Upon the face of the platforms the Republican party would have been entitled to the undivided support of all Reformers. But the candidates were Mr. Blaine and

Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Blaine said many good things in his letter of acceptance. Impartiality in the mode of appointment, to be based on qualification, and security of tenure, to be based on faithful discharge of duty, were the two ends to be accomplished. The public business would be aided by separating the legislative branch of the Government from all control of appointments, and the executive department would be relieved by subjecting appointments to fixed rules, and thus removing them from the caprice of favoritism. The law which arbitrarily limited the term of the commission offered a constant temptation to changes for mere political reasons. The essential modification of that law would be in many respects advantageous. The rule of impartial appointment might with advantage be carried beyond any existing provision of the Civil Service Law. It should be applied to appointments in the consular service, and to secretaries of legation. The people had the right to the most efficient agents in the discharge of public business, and the appointing power should regard this as the prior and ulterior consideration.

These declarations were admirable. The separation of the legislative branch of the Government from control of the appointments meant the abolition of Congressional patronage. Mr. Blaine's remarks upon the four-years tenure of office show how clearly he understood the demand of the platform for the repeal of inconsistent legislation. If the mere declarations of the platform and candidate had been conclusive, the election of Mr. Blaine should certainly have been satisfactory to Civil Service Reformers. But there were a large number of men devoted to this cause who deeply distrusted the Republican candidate. Although many supported him, yet others, and some of the most eminent, preferred a man who, upon a weaker platform and with a declaration less explicit, gave, as they believed, better assurances in his past record. These were the words in which Mr. Cleveland accepted the nomination:

The selection and retention of subordinates in Government employment should depend upon their ascertained fitness and

the value of their work, and they should be neither expected nor allowed to do questionable party service. The interests of the people will be better protected ; the estimate of public labor and duty will be immensely improved ; public employment will be open to all who can demonstrate their fitness to enter it. The unseemly scramble for place under the Government, with the consequent importunity which embitters official life, will cease, and the public Departments will not be filled with those who conceive it to be their first duty to aid the party to which they owe their places instead of rendering patient and honest return to the people.

Not long after Mr. Cleveland's election and previous to his inauguration, he gave, in his letter to Mr. Curtis, a still more definite declaration. After pledging himself to the enforcement of the law he declared that there was a class of positions not within the letter of the statute, but so disconnected with the policy of the Administration that a removal of incumbents should not be made during the terms for which they were appointed solely on partisan grounds and for the purpose of putting in their places those in political accord with the appointing power. But many holding such positions had forfeited all just claims for retention because they had used their places for party purposes in disregard of their duty to the people, and because, instead of being decent public servants, they had proved themselves offensive partisans and unscrupulous manipulators of local party management. The lessons of the past should be unlearned, and such officials, as well as their successors, should be taught that efficiency, fitness and devotion to public duty were the conditions of their continuance in public place.

These are but few of many declarations then made by Mr. Cleveland in favor of Civil Service Reform. He was far in advance of his party, and for some time he resisted with firmness the importunities of spoilsmen. Yet as time went on and pressure was continued, there were serious breaches made in the defences. He promised the enforcement of the Pendleton law ; yet in Indiana, in Maryland, in Chicago, in the Philadelphia postoffice and in other conspicuous instances, that law was signally evaded and nullified. He declared that removals would not be made on partisan grounds during the terms for



which the incumbents were appointed ; yet the displacement of such employees to make room for Democrats was well nigh universal. Thousands were removed upon secret charges, which were not seldom false, preferred often by irresponsible and interested parties, and these men were so dismissed without opportunity for defence, denial or explanation. Officials should be taught, he said, that efficiency, fitness and devotion to public duty were the conditions of their continuance in office. Yet the offices were largely filled by the unscrupulous politicians whom he had himself denounced. Republicans forfeited their places for offensive partisanship, yet offensive Democratic partisans were retained. Places were given out as the booty of Congressmen in disregard of fitness, and federal officeholders continued to manipulate conventions. Some few extensions of the classified service were made during Mr. Cleveland's term, yet it was not until he had been defeated in the election of 1888 that a really important extension was made by him—that which included the Railway Mail Service, embracing some six thousand employees.

In 1888, when the Democratic party was in power, the Democratic platform was practically silent. It merely affirmed the very debatable proposition that honest Reform in the Civil Service has been inaugurated and maintained by President Cleveland.

In this year the Republicans, as we all remember, repeated the admirable declaration of 1884, with the vituperative addition that the Mugwumps had deserted pretty much everything that was good and especially Civil Service Reform, and with the tautological assurance, "We will not fail to keep our pledges because they have broken theirs or because their candidate has broken his." Subsequent events would indicate that in this the party did "protest too much." And doubts may well be entertained whether an agreement not to break one's word adds to the value of the original promise.

Four years ago, at the conference in Baltimore, I took occasion to discuss the meaning of the promises then made and what we might expect in the fulfillment of

them. As a matter of the construction of plain English words there could be little doubt as to their interpretation. As a matter of prophecy, the accuracy of these statements was not supernatural. According to the platform the Reform was to be extended to all grades of the service to which it was applicable. It was applicable to postoffices and custom-houses having less than twenty-five employees. The law itself said that, yet the President extended it to no such custom-houses and to no such postoffices until after he had been defeated for reelection. It was applicable to the census bureau. The successful experiment of England showed that, yet the President refused so to extend it. It was applicable to the entire labor service of the Government. Massachusetts has demonstrated that, yet with one very honorable exception in the navy yards—which, however, have not yet been embraced within the Civil Service Rules—the President failed to extend to any part of this service the principles of classification.

Mr. Harrison said the law should have the aid of a friendly interpretation and be faithfully enforced; yet political assessments went on in violation of law at Baltimore and elsewhere unproved and unpunished, over the protests of the President's own Commissioners. The spirit and purpose of Reform were to be observed in all executive appointments, "fitness, and not party service, was to be the essential and discriminating test, fidelity and efficiency the only sure tenure of office, and only the interests of the public service should suggest removals"; yet Mr. Clarkson's guillotine ran at a speed unexampled in history. Such names as David Martin, Governor Warmouth and Stephen B. Elkins showed the wide range of that "fitness" which was the essential test, and the presence of the place-holders at Minneapolis the kind of fidelity and efficiency which gave sure tenure to office.

The workmen in the navy yards and a few hundred places in the Indian service and under the Fish Commission were all that Mr. Harrison gave us in fulfillment of his extensive engagements, until after the election of

1892. It is when an Administration is in extremis that its heart turns toward Reform. It was amid disheartening surroundings in 1883 that the Republican party favored the enactment of the Civil Service Law. It was after his defeat in 1888 that Mr. Cleveland classified the Railway Mail Service. It was after the writ of ejectment was served last November that President Harrison included all free delivery offices.

Our chief executives are not wholly unlike that other distinguished ruler with whom the affliction of disease was a condition precedent to his desire to assume the sacerdotal office. In a Civil Service Reform sense it may be said of more than one of our Presidents that nothing in his official life became him like the leaving of it. The retiring Administration resembles the swan: it sings the sweetest in the hour of its passing. And so may it continue to be until the time when it shall be no longer necessary for the people to decree the death of the singer before they can hope to listen to the music. Rotation in *political* office is not without its uses.

In the last campaign the respective situations of the two parties were reversed. It was the Republicans who were stricken dumb by the paralysis of officeholding; it was the Democracy which lifted up its voice like one crying in the wilderness. For it is with parties as with Presidents—there is no greater incentive to the culture of self-sacrificing patriotism than exclusion from the table of patronage. Public virtue resides principally in the party out of power. "Sweet are the uses of adversity." It is sorrow that chastens and purifies the soul.

It is largely in recognition of this fact that Indiana Civil Service Reformers are so often found in the ranks of the opposition. We want to be in the company of those who stand most for political rectitude.

But to return to the platforms of 1892. In the Republican Convention Mr. Foraker was chairman of the platform committee. Under such midwifery it was hardly to be expected that the declaration in favor of Civil Service Reform should be lusty or stalwart. It merely

expressed the contentment of those who held the places, who did not wish to be annoyed with the fanaticism of unpractical Reformers: "We commend the spirit and evidence of Reform in the Civil Service, and the wise and consistent enforcement by the Republican party of the laws regulating the same."

It was the exiled Democracy that could see much more clearly that things were not going on as they ought to go. And as theirs is the platform intended for the guidance of the present Administration, it will be well for us to consider, somewhat in detail, the meaning of its language, and what we have a right to expect from a fair reading of its terms taken in connection with the declarations of Mr. Cleveland since it was adopted. I will premise that this is not done in any spirit of prophecy. We have had both words and acts from the same sources before, and we know that they have not always kept step together.

There was great appropriateness in Dante's punishment of the Soothsayer: "Because he wished to see too far before him, backward he looks and backward goes his way." The outlook in retrospect is not always so comforting as that which fancy pictures for the future. "Retrospect," as President Harrison informed us, "will be a safer basis of judgment than promises."

The question is simply this: What have we the *right to expect* from the platform? "Public office," it says, "is a public trust." If it be this, it cannot be used to pay personal or party debts. It can neither be made a family perquisite, nor a fund for the reward of those who have rendered efficient service in conventions and campaigns. It is the administration of the office for the benefit of the people which must alone be considered, otherwise the trust will not be performed. A trustee cannot deal either personally or as a member of a firm or corporation with the trust property. A President cannot so deal with the offices either for himself or for his party.

"We reãffirm," so says the platform, "the declaration of the Democratic National Convention of 1876 for the

Reform of the Civil Service, and we call for the honest enforcement of all laws regulating the same." The enforcement of such laws cannot be expected if men who have the appointing power in the classified service are themselves unfriendly to the Law, and, like the late Aquilla Jones, say that they "despise it." Men do not gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles. The Law cannot be enforced unless the Commissioners are men of unflinching integrity, earnest purpose, ability, energy and enthusiasm. But this is not enough. The Law cannot be enforced if other officers of the Government fail to do their duty in regard to it. It cannot be enforced if the Department of Justice fail to prosecute those who violate its penal provisions. It cannot be enforced if Cabinet officers, heads of divisions, postmasters, collectors and all other officers in charge of classified subordinates fail to remove the men who violate it. If the Postmaster-General and the Secretary of the Treasury should, like their predecessors, retain in service men who by their own confession are guilty of collecting prohibited political assessments, it cannot be enforced. The party has promised, then, that this thing will not be done.

The platform of 1876, referred to in these resolutions, declares: "Reform is necessary in the Civil Service. Experience proves that efficient, economical conduct of the Government business is not possible if the Civil Service be subject to change in every election, be a prize fought for at the ballot box, be a brief reward of party zeal, instead of posts of honor, assigned for proved competency and held for fidelity in the public employ." We are therefore to have no "clean sweep." The Civil Service is not to be subject to change as the mere result of the election, and we are no longer to see the participants in the political contest rewarded by the offices. That is what the platform means. These places are to be posts of honor assigned for *proved competency*. How shall this competency be proven? Within the classified service by examinations and probation; and outside of that service is there any better proof than experience? And yet we find that the President looks with disfavor upon

applications of persons who held office under his former Administration for reäppointment to their old places. No doubt in some cases this disfavor is justified. But is not the rule which excludes the good as well as the bad rather inconsistent with the platform? The declaration goes further: the place must not only be assigned for proved competency, but must be held for fidelity. If this rule is observed, no man who has been thoroughly faithful to his trust will be removed or supplanted. There is no question of any four-years term in this; fidelity is to be the criterion of retention.

The platform of 1876 says something even more important: "The dispensing of patronage should neither be a tax upon the time of our public men nor the instrument of their ambition." If this be carried out in letter and spirit, Democratic Congressmen can no longer seek reëlection by apportioning federal offices in their respective districts. The Postmaster-General will no longer regard as conclusive the recommendation of a Congressman, nor indeed as valuable in any other sense than as giving information of the qualifications of the man to be appointed. The domain of public office is no longer to be held upon feudal tenures by the Congressional barons and divided among their henchmen. It is no longer to be a tax upon the time of Representatives in Congress nor the instrument of their ambition. When patronage shall be abolished as completely as this platform calls for, we shall have passed the turning point in Civil Service Reform.

But, even thus early in the Administration, the proof multiplies that this obligation is little regarded. The President and the members of the Cabinet are spending most of their time with the office-seekers. Congressmen belabor them with importunities, bringing in applicants in droves and platoons, twenty at a time. The fourth-class postoffices are being filled at the rate of thirty thousand a year. There have been one or two trifling misunderstandings between Congressmen and Mr. Maxwell, but, as a rule, the Congressmen have had their way. They are as busy in the distribution of of-

fices as ever. Postmasters must be faithful to their trust, but not for more than four years. At the end of that time, good or bad, they go. Still there is some gain in this. Places are to be assigned for competency. But it is hard to understand what sort of proof was insisted upon in the case of Hughes East, a political adventurer who received an important position as chief of division with more than a hundred subordinates; or in the case of Burke, our District Attorney in Indiana, or Risley, a man who is in a place where he can entertain the Court of Denmark with reminiscences of the Knights of the Golden Circle.

Of course we all know that mistakes will be made even by the best of Administrations. The great difficulty here is not the occasional error, but the system resorted to which gives rise to this error. Except for political reasons no man in his senses would consider that Daniel W. Voorhees is of all men in Indiana best fitted to give testimony as to the qualifications for office of Indiana citizens. And this has manifestly been the source from which a number of such appointments came.

We now come to that declaration of the platform of 1892 which refers to the Minneapolis Convention as an object lesson of the evils of the spoils system: "The nomination of the President as in the recent Republican convention, by delegations composed largely of his appointees holding office at his pleasure, is a scandalous satire upon our free institutions and a startling illustration of the methods by which a President may gratify his ambition."

These words necessarily imply that the Democratic party will not repeat such a precedent. But the platform goes further: "We denounce a policy under which federal officeholders usurp the control of party conventions in the States." This has been done from time almost immemorial under both parties. The Democracy assures us by its denunciation that it is now to cease. Officeholders shall no longer renominate the Congressmen to whom they owe their places. Yet, if this is not to be done, why are Democratic Congress-

men bestirring themselves in such wearisome fashion to get places for the men who have already aided them?

The platform closes as follows: "We pledge the Democratic party to the reform of these and all other abuses which threaten individual liberty and local self-government." This contract is a pretty large one. When the party shall have performed it, the party will have deserved well of the Republic.

The platform, if fairly carried out, means a great deal. It means probably much more than many of those who voted for it intended. Many who supported it will no doubt be found foremost in the attempt to overturn its promises. It was on the whole a better platform than many of us expected, and yet it is decidedly inferior to the Republican declarations of 1884 and 1888. It does not specifically demand the extension of the classified system. It does not directly require a repeal of the four-years term of office. Its most important propositions were embodied by mere reference to the platform of 1876. Many who voted for it were no doubt ignorant of the precise nature of the promises they were supporting. They were willing to endorse what a previous Democratic convention had done, if they did not know exactly what that was. It is by necessary inference rather than by direct allegation that the most important parts of this platform are valuable. The Democracy could not have offered a more stinging criticism upon the conduct of their opponents than to have repeated *in ipsissimis verbis* the declaration of 1884 and 1888. They did something less than this, but still enough, under fair construction, to give an immense impetus to the Reform.

Mr. Cleveland said to us in his letter of acceptance:

Public officials are the agents of the people. It is, therefore, their duty to secure for those whom they represent the best and most efficient performance of public work. This, plainly, can be best accomplished by regarding ascertained fitness in the selection of Government employees. These considerations alone are sufficient justification of an honest adherence to the letter and spirit of Civil Service Reform. There are, however, other features of this plan which abundantly commend it. Through its



operation worthy merit in every station and condition of American life is recognized in the distribution of public employment, while its application tends to raise the standard of political activity from spoils-hunting and unthinking party affiliation to the advocacy of party principles by reason and argument.

The President has further spoken in his inaugural :

To secure the fitness and competency of appointees to office and to remove from political action the demoralizing madness for spoils, Civil Service Reform has found a place in our public policy and laws. The benefits already gained through this instrumentality and the further usefulness it promises, entitle it to the hearty support and encouragement of all who desire to see our public service well performed, or who hope for the elevation of political sentiment and the purification of political methods.

But more valuable than the platform expressions, the Democratic party have elected a President, who, in spite of very great previous shortcomings, has still shown a strong desire and no small amount of persistent energy on behalf of a Reformed Civil Service. In his previous administration he withstood for a long time a pressure which few would have resisted so well. In spite of much inconsistent conduct I do not doubt that the personal sentiments of both of the last Presidents were friendly, or that, if left entirely alone, they would have done much more than they did do on behalf of Civil Service Reform. The immediate influences upon a President are immensely strong in favor of the spoils system. The pressure for place among those who throng the ante-chambers of the White House is calculated to shut out a fair view of the general perspective of public opinion beyond. Before Mr. Harrison was elected I had a talk upon this subject with a gentleman who afterward became one of his most confidential counsellors. He said: "Those who live in the White House live in a fool's paradise. They have no notion of the public sentiment which lies outside the precincts of Washington." At this time the gentleman referred to was a Civil Service Reformer. He soon became a dweller in this enchanted region ; I then learned from him that there was a great retrogression in public sentiment in regard to Civil Service Reform, and I thought of the fool's paradise.

President Cleveland in his present term, reëlected after defeat and with no hope of future renomination, has great advantages. He cannot be unconscious of the fact that his great strength with the people is due more to his resistance to the spoilsmen than to his concessions to them. Nowhere was his consciousness of this more clearly portrayed than in his conduct at the Tammany banquet when, in the midst of a campaign, he refused to make any pledges in regard to the distribution of the patronage. He never said anything which more strengthened him with the people of this country. He can hardly fail to remember that the successful campaigns of the Democratic party were the campaigns in which it had given the strongest assurances of Civil Service Reform. Under these circumstances it is safe to believe that, although the promises of the platform will not be wholly fulfilled, yet much will be done to remove other portions of the public service from the patronage system which has dishonored our institutions. Maxwell, the logical successor of Clarkson, is still hard at work, but the removals are not quite half so numerous as they were four years ago. Speaking as an Indiana man, it must be conceded that the appointment of Isaac P. Gray, Risley and Burke cannot at all be justified as consistent with a platform which says that a public office is a public trust. Yet no raiser of campaign funds has yet received the recognition of a Cabinet appointment. There is strong reason to believe that when the time is ripe the classified service will be extended. Secrecy, which for a moment threatened to obscure changes in the Post Office Department, was speedily discarded. Removal on ex-parte charges that the public were not permitted to see or know, was perhaps one of the very greatest of the abuses under Mr. Cleveland's former Administration; it has not ceased, but has been confined to smaller places only. Wherever it appears, and under whatever circumstances, it is a crying evil which demands redress. There can be no just removal upon any charges which the accused is not permitted to see. In all these matters public opinion, to which, if it be just and impartial, Mr.

Cleveland is more than usually responsive, should be set to work. His friends should be as fearless in criticism as his antagonists. They have, I think, not always been so. As Civil Service Reformers it is our duty to be as free from the cult or worship of any man as from that of any political organization.

Such are the declarations of the several parties and their candidates since the day when Civil Service Reform was first talked of down to the date of these presents. Performance, as yet, does not wholly keep step with promises. It is a little like the clock for which its owner apologized by saying, "It is a good clock if you only understand it. When it strikes ten and the hands point to three, then you may know that it is a quarter past seven." But, whether the clock be fast or slow, time advances surely and constantly. And so does Civil Service Reform. Because parties have not lived up to their platforms, will it do to say that these are meaningless? The general advance shows that there is a deep meaning in them. Platforms have outgrown the period of hostility and indifference, and, in response to the force of public sentiment, parties are willing to promise anything, often more that they can perform.

Because Presidents have failed to live up to their own standards of duty, must we, therefore, believe that Reform itself has faltered? Its growth has been constant and irresistible, and in the old, illogical, practical Anglo-Saxon way, by compromise. Each President has made a compromise with Satan by which Satan has lost a little territory. Let this go on long enough and the Satan of Spoils Politics will not have an acre left. The growth has perhaps been more healthy because it has not been too fast. It has followed the analogies of nature: first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear. The best work of humanity has been done in just this way. So it was with slavery: first exclusion from the Territories, next the proclamation, then the Constitutional amendment.

The important thing for us is to observe what have been the lines of this growth. Nearly all the progress

we can see and measure has come about through the classified service: This began with about fifteen thousand; now, considerably more than forty thousand places are embraced in it. It has twice received most valuable bequests from the last wills and testaments of departing Administrations. To the extension of this system should our efforts be chiefly directed.

John and Maria were crossing a stream. The current was swift and the ford was deep. John drove a strong bay horse and a little sorrel mare. The sorrel lagged behind and he belabored her with useless blows. Maria took him by the shoulder. "John," she said, "whip the strong horse."

He did so and they reached the bank. Let us whip the strong horse. Let us urge forward the classified service.

## THE MISSOURI CORRUPT PRACTICES ACT.

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*Drafted and promoted by the Civil Service Reform Association of Missouri. Passed in the State Senate March 15, 1893, in the House March 17, and signed by Governor Stone April 1.*

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### AN ACT

TO PREVENT CORRUPT PRACTICES IN ELECTIONS, TO LIMIT THE EXPENSES OF CANDIDATES, TO PRESCRIBE THE DUTIES OF CANDIDATES AND POLITICAL COMMITTEES, AND PROVIDE PENALTIES AND REMEDIES FOR VIOLATION OF THIS ACT.

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:*

SECTION 1. The following persons shall be deemed guilty of bribery at elections, and shall be punished accordingly: First, every person who shall, directly or indirectly, by himself, or by any other person on his behalf, give, lend, or agree to give or lend, or shall offer, promise, or promise to procure or endeavor to procure, any money or valuable consideration, to or for any voter, or to or for any person on behalf of any voter, or to or for any other person, in order to induce any voter to vote, or refrain from voting, or shall corruptly do any such act as aforesaid, on account of such voter having voted or refrained from voting at any election. Second, every person who shall, directly or indirectly, by himself, or by any other person on his behalf, give or procure, or agree to give or procure, or offer, promise, or promise to procure, or endeavor to procure, any office, place or employment, public or private, to or for any voter, or to or for any person on behalf of any voter, or to or for any other person, in order to induce such voter to vote, or refrain from voting, or shall corruptly do any such act as aforesaid, on account of any voter having voted or refrained from voting at any election. Third, every person who shall, directly or indirectly, by himself, or any other person on his behalf, make any

such gift, loan, offer, promise, procurement or agreement as aforesaid, to or for any person, in order to induce such person to procure, or endeavor to procure, the election of any person to a public office, or the vote of any voter at any election. Fourth, every person who shall, upon or in consequence of any such gift, loan, offer, promise, procurement or agreement, procure or engage, promise or endeavor to procure the election of any person to a public office, or the vote of any voter at any election. Fifth, every person who shall advance or pay, or cause to be paid, any money to or for the use of any other person, with the intent that such money or any part thereof shall be expended in bribery at any election, or who shall knowingly pay or cause to be paid any money wholly or in part expended in bribery at any election. And any person so offending shall be guilty of a felony, and shall be punished by imprisonment in the penitentiary for a term of not less than two years and not more than five years; and for every such offence he shall also forfeit the sum of \$500, with costs of suit, to any person who shall sue for the same in the name of the State of Missouri, to the use of the person suing, in any circuit court in this State having jurisdiction of the person of the defendant: Provided always, that the foregoing enactment shall not extend to or be construed to extend to any money paid or agreed to be paid for or an account of any legal expenses bona fide incurred at or concerning any election.

SEC. 2. The following persons shall also be deemed guilty of bribery at elections, and shall be punished accordingly: 1. Every voter who shall, before or during any election, directly or indirectly, by himself, or by any other person on his behalf, receive, agree or contract for any money, gift, loan or valuable consideration, office, place or employment, public or private, for himself or for any other person, for voting, or agreeing to vote, or for refraining or agreeing to refrain from voting at any election. 2. Every person who shall, after any election, directly or indirectly, by himself, or by any other person on his behalf, receive any money or valuable consideration on account of any person having voted or refrained from voting, or having induced any other person to vote or refrain from voting at any election; and any person so offending shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be punished by imprisonment in the county jail not less than one month and not more than one year.

SEC. 3. Any candidate for a public office, or any person seeking to become the nominee of any party as such candidate, who, within ten days prior to any primary election or meeting held to select delegates to a convention to nominate a candidate for the public office which he seeks to obtain, or who within 60 days prior to the election whereat an incumbent for the office so sought by him is chosen, corruptly, by himself or by any other person, directly or indirectly gives or provides or pays, wholly or in part, or promises to pay wholly or in part, the expense of giving or providing any meat, drink, entertainment or provision to or for any

person for the purpose of corruptly influencing that person or any other person or give or refrain from giving his vote at such election, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof shall be fined twenty five dollars for each offence.

SEC. 4. Every person who shall, directly or indirectly, by himself, or any other person on his behalf, make use of or threaten to make use of any force, violence or restraint or inflict or threaten to inflict, by himself or by any other person, any temporal or spiritual injury, damage, harm or loss upon or against any person in order to induce or compel such person to vote or refrain from voting at any election, or who shall, by abduction, duress or any fraudulent device or contrivance, impede or prevent the free exercise of the franchise of any elector, or shall thereby compel, induce or prevail upon any elector either to give or refrain from giving his vote at any election, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by imprisonment in the county jail not less than one month and not more than one year.

SEC. 5. A person shall, for all purposes of this act, be deemed guilty of the offence of personation, who, at any election held pursuant to the laws of the State, applies for a ballot paper in the name of some other person, whether that name be that of a person living or dead, or of a fictitious person, or who, having voted once at any election, applies at the same election for a ballot paper in his own name or any other name; and any person who commits the offence of personation, or who aids, abets, counsels or procures the commission of that offence, shall be guilty of a felony, and upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by imprisonment in the penitentiary for a term of not less than two years or more than five years.

SEC. 6. No candidate for congress or for any public office in this State, or in any county, district or municipality thereof, which office is to be filled by popular election, shall by himself or by or through any agent or agents, committee or organization, or any person or persons whatsoever, in the aggregate pay out or expend or promise or agree or offer to pay, contribute or expend, any money or other valuable thing in order to secure or aid in securing his nomination or election, or the nomination or election of any other person or persons, or both such nomination and election, to any office to be voted for at the same election, or in aid of any party or measure, in excess of a sum to be determined upon the following basis, namely: For five thousand voters or less, one hundred dollars; for each one hundred voters over five thousand and under twenty-five thousand, two dollars; for each one hundred voters over twenty-five thousand and under fifty thousand, one dollar; and for each one hundred voters over fifty thousand, fifty cents—the number of voters to be ascertained by the total number of votes cast for all the candidates for such office at the last preceding regular election held to fill the same; and any payment, contribution or expenditure or promise, agree-

ment or offer to pay, contribute or expend any money or valuable thing in excess of said sum, for such objects or purposes, is hereby declared unlawful.

SEC. 7. Every person who shall be a candidate before any caucus or convention, or at any primary election, or at any election for any State, county, city, township, district or municipal office, or for senator or representative in the general assembly of Missouri, or for senator or for representative in the congress of the United States, shall, within thirty days after the election held to fill such office or place, make out and file with the officer empowered by law to issue the certificate of election to such office or place, and a duplicate thereof with the recorder of deeds for the county in which such candidate resides, a statement in writing which statement and duplicate shall be subscribed and sworn to by such candidate before an officer authorized to administer oaths, setting forth in detail all sums of money contributed, disbursed, expended or promised by him, and to the best of his knowledge and belief, by any other persons or person in his behalf, wholly or in part, in endeavoring to secure or in any way in connection with his nomination or election to such office or place, or in connection with the election or any other persons at said election, and showing the dates when, and the persons to whom, and the purposes for which all such sums were paid, expended or promised. Such statement shall also set forth that the same is as full and explicit as affiant is able to make it. No officer authorized by law to issue commissions or certificates of election shall issue a commission or certificate of election to any such person until such statement shall have been so made, verified and filed by such persons with said officer.

SEC. 8. Any person failing to comply with the provisions of the seventh section of this act, shall be liable to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars, to be recovered in an action brought in the name of the State by the attorney-general, or by the prosecuting attorney of the county of the candidate's residence, the amount of said fine to be fixed within the above limit by the jury, and to be paid into the school fund of said county.

SEC. 9. No person shall enter upon the duties of any elective office until he shall have filed the statement and duplicate provided for in section seven of this act, nor shall he receive any salary or any emolument for any period prior to the filing of the same.

SEC. 10. At any time during the term of office of any public officer, elected under the laws of this State, or under the charter of any city therein, the person who received the next highest number of votes for such office at the election at which such public officer was elected, as shown by the official count, may present an application in writing, and verified by his affidavit, to the attorney-general, setting forth one or more of the following charges against such public officer, to wit: That at the election at which such public officer was elected, the total amount expended,



contributed or incurred by such officer exceeded the sum allowed by section 6 of this act for such candidate, or that votes were secured by him or his agent or agents, or with his consent or connivance, or with the consent or connivance of his agent or agents, by some committee or organization or some political party, of which party such public officer was a nominee, or by which he was supported, or the agent or agents of some such committee or organization, by paying, contributing, offering or promising to contribute money or other valuable thing as a compensation or reward, or by some promise or influence the giving such vote or votes, or that votes were withheld from such applicant by reason of such practices by or on behalf of such officer, agent, committee or organization, or by reason of some act on behalf of such officer declared by this act to be unlawful; and further setting forth that the applicant desires said attorney-general to bring an action to have such public office declared vacant on account of said violation of the laws concerning elections. Such application shall be accompanied by a bond to the State of Missouri in the penalty of one thousand dollars, subscribed by two sureties, who shall justify as freeholders of the State, and in double the amount of such penalty, exclusive of all their debts and liabilities, and property exempt by law from levy and sale under execution—such bond to be conditioned for the payment to the State of all the taxable costs and disbursements for which it may become liable for or on account of such action.

SEC. 11. It shall be the duty of the attorney-general, within ten days after the receipt of such application and bond, to begin an action against such public officer, or to instruct the prosecuting attorney of the county in which such public officer resides, to bring such action within ten days after such notice, to have said office declared vacant, and for such other or further relief appropriate in an action against the usurper of any office or franchise. Such action shall be deemed to be, and shall be conducted according to the rules prescribed by law for an action against the usurper of an office or franchise; and it shall be the duty of any prosecuting attorney to bring such action within ten days after the receipt of such notice from the attorney general.

SEC. 12. In case the attorney general and prosecuting attorney shall neglect or refuse to bring such action within the time limited in section 11 of this act, it shall be lawful for the applicant to bring such action in the name of the State, but at his own expense and by his attorney or attorneys; and in any action so brought by said applicant no recovery for costs and disbursements shall be had against the State; provided, that in any case, whether instituted by the attorney-general or the prosecuting attorney, or by the applicant in person, if the court shall at any time pending such action, find the bond given as aforesaid inadequate in amount to cover the costs accrued or likely to accrue in the cause, or shall find any surety or sureties insufficient, additional bond or other sureties may be required by the

court within such time and upon such terms as the court may order ; and upon failure to comply with any such order of the court, such action may be dismissed at the cost of the applicant and his sureties.

SEC. 13. Such action shall have a preference on the docket of any court of the State in which the same shall be pending, over all other civil actions whatever.

SEC. 14. If it shall be determined in any such action that any one or more of the charges defined in section 10 of this act, and set forth in the petition, has been sustained, judgment shall be rendered ousting and excluding such defendant from such office, and in favor of the State or plaintiff, as the case may be, subject to the provisions of the next succeeding section, and for the costs of the action. But if no one of the charges set forth in the petition in said cause be sustained, judgment shall be rendered against such applicant and his sureties on the bond or bonds for the costs of such action.

SEC. 15. In any such action such applicant, upon his own motion or on the motion of the defendant, shall be made a party plaintiff; and in any case in which such applicant shall be a party, if judgment of ouster against the defendant shall be rendered as provided in section 14 of this act, said judgment shall award such office in said applicant, unless it shall be further determined in such action, upon appropriate pleading and proof by defendant that some act has been done or committed which would have been ground in a similar action against such plaintiff had he been declared elected to such office, for a judgment of ouster against him ; and if it shall be so determined at the trial, such office shall be in the judgment declared vacant, and shall thereupon be filled by appointment, or a new election, as may be otherwise provided by law regarding such office.

SEC. 16. No person shall be excused from answering any question on trial of such action relating to any of the acts claimed to have been committed by any party thereto, or any of the persons, committees or organizations mentioned in the twelfth section of this act, on the ground that such answer would tend to incriminate or degrade such person or witness. But no such answer or answers shall be used or be evidence against such witness in any criminal action, prosecution or proceeding whatever.

SEC. 17. Every two or more persons who shall be elected, appointed, chosen or associated for the purpose, wholly or in part, of raising, collecting or disbursing money, or of controlling or directing the raising, collection or disbursement of money for election purposes, and every two or more persons who shall cooperate in the raising, collection or disbursement, or in controlling or directing the raising, collection or disbursement of money used or to be used in furtherance of the election or to defeat the election to public office of any person or any class or number of persons, or in furtherance of the enactment or to defeat the enactment of any law or ordinance, or constitutional provision,

shall be deemed a political committee within the meaning of this act.

**SEC. 18.** Every political committee shall appoint and constantly maintain a treasurer, to receive, keep and disburse all sums of money which may be collected or received or disbursed by such committee, or by any of its members, for any of the purposes mentioned in section 17 of this act, for which such committee exists or acts; and, unless such treasurer is first appointed and thereafter maintained, it shall be unlawful and a violation of this act for a political committee or any of its members to collect, receive or disburse money for any such purpose. All money collected or received or disbursed by any political committee, or by any member or members thereof, for any of the purposes mentioned in section 17 of this act, and for which such committee exists or acts, shall be paid over and made to pass through the hands of the treasurer of such committee, and shall be disbursed by him; and it shall be unlawful and a violation of this act for any political committee, or for any member or members of a political committee, to disburse or expend money for any of the objects or purposes mentioned in section 17 of this act, and for which such committee exists or acts, until the money so disbursed or expended shall have passed through the hands of the treasurer of such political committee.

**SEC. 19.** Every treasurer of a political committee and every person who shall at any time act as such treasurer, shall whenever he receives or disburses money as such treasurer, or for or on account of any of the objects or purposes mentioned in section 17 of this act, immediately enter and thereafter keep, in a proper book or books to be provided and preserved by him, a full, true and detailed statement and account of each and every sum of money so received or disbursed by him, setting forth in such statement the sum so received or disbursed, as the case may be, and the date when and the person from whom received, or to whom paid as the case may be, and the object and purpose for which such sum was received or disbursed.

**SEC. 20.** Every treasurer of a political committee as defined in this act, and every person who shall act as such treasurer shall, within thirty days after each and every election, whether State, county, city, municipal, township or district election, in or concerning or in connection with which he shall have received or disbursed any money for any of the objects or purposes mentioned in section 17 of this act, prepare and file in the office of the recorder of deeds of the county in which such treasurer resides a full, true and detailed account and statement, subscribed and sworn to by him before an officer authorized to administer oaths, setting forth each and every sum of money received or disbursed by him for any of the objects or purposes mentioned in section 17 of this act within the period beginning ninety days before such election and ending on the day on which such statement is filed, the date of receipt and each disburse-

ment, the name of the person from whom received or to whom paid, and the object or purpose for which the same was received and the object or purpose for which disbursed. Such statement shall also set forth the unpaid debts and obligations of any of such committee, with the nature and amount of each, and to whom owing, in detail, and if there is no unpaid debts or obligations of such committee, such statement shall state such fact.

**SEC. 21.** Every officer required by law to issue certificates of election or commissions as the result of elections shall receive and file in his office and there keep as part of the records thereof for four years after they are filed, all statements and accounts required by this act to be filed with him. Such statements and accounts shall, at all reasonable times, be open to the public inspection. After four years succeeding the filing of such statements they shall be destroyed by such officer or his successor. Copies of such statements, certified by such officer under the seal of his office, of any such statement or statements; and any copy so certified shall be admitted in evidence in all courts with like force and effect as the original would have produced.

**SEC. 22.** Every treasurer of a political committee as defined in this act who shall willfully fail, neglect or refuse to make out, verify and file with the recorder of deeds the statement required by section 20 of this act, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon a conviction shall be fined not less than fifty or more than five hundred dollars

**SEC. 23.** Every treasurer of a political committee, and every person who shall receive any money to be applied to any of the purposes mentioned in section 17 of this act, who shall either:

*First*—Neglect or fail to keep a correct book or books of account, setting forth all the details required to set forth in the account and statement contemplated in sections 19 and 20 of this act (except that the book or books need not be subscribed or sworn to), with intent to conceal the receipt or disbursement of any such sum received or disbursed by him or by any other person, or the purpose or object for which the same was received or disbursed, or to conceal the fact that there is any unpaid debt or obligation of such treasurer or committee, or the nature or amount thereof, or to whom owing, in detail; or—

*Second*—Mutilate, deface or destroy any such book or books of account, with intent to conceal any fact disclosed by such book or books; or—

*Third*—Fail to file the statement and account contemplated by said section 20, within five days after he shall receive notice in writing, signed by five resident freeholders of the county in which such treasurer or political committee or person resides, requesting him to file statement and account, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction shall be imprisoned in the county jail for not less than two or more than six months.

**SEC. 24.** All acts and parts of acts inconsistent with this act are hereby repealed.

# CONSTITUTION

OF THE

## National Civil-Service Reform League.

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### I.

The name of this organization shall be the National Civil-Service Reform League.

### II.

The object of the National Civil-Service Reform League shall be to promote the purposes and to facilitate the correspondence and the united action of the Civil-Service Reform Associations.

### III.

The League shall consist of all the Civil-Service Reform Associations in the United States which signify their willingness to become members thereof. Any association hereafter expressing such willingness shall become a member of the League upon its being accepted as such by the League or the Executive Committee. Any member of any such association may be present at any meeting of the League and take part in the debates or discussions as the by-laws may provide.

### IV.

At any meeting of the League, each association belonging to it shall be entitled to one vote upon every

question coming before the League; such vote may be cast by a personal representative designated by each association, or by proxy, as the by-laws may provide. If no such designation be made the delegates from such association present at such meeting, or a majority of them, may cast the vote of such association.

#### V.

The officers of the League shall be a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and nine Vice-Presidents; and there shall be a General Committee and an Executive Committee. The officers and the committees shall hold office until their successors are appointed or elected.

#### VI.

The President and Vice-Presidents shall be elected by ballot at the annual meeting of the League.

The Secretary and Treasurer shall be chosen, and may be removed, by the General Committee.

The General Committee shall be chosen annually, and shall consist of one delegate from each association belonging to the League; and one additional delegate for every two hundred members, or major fraction thereof, of such association as certified by its secretary. Each Association shall elect its own delegates in such manner as it may determine.

The members of the Executive Committee shall be ex-officio members of the General Committee.

Any member of the General Committee may act by proxy.

The General Committee shall keep a record of its proceedings, and shall make a report to the League at the annual meeting. A vacancy in any office, except that of Vice-President, may be filled by the General Committee for the remainder of the term.

The General Committee may delegate to the Executive Committee any of its powers; provided, however, that it may at any time resume the powers so delegated.

The Executive Committee shall consist of nineteen members to be elected annually by the General Com-

mittee and shall have power to fix its own quorum. And any member of the Executive Committee may act by proxy.

#### VII.

The General Committee may, subject to these articles, manage the affairs of the League, direct and dispose of the funds, and may, from time to time, make and modify by-laws for the League and for its own action.

No debt shall be contracted, nor shall any appropriation of money be made, by the League or by the General Committee, beyond the amount in the hands of the Treasurer.

#### VIII.

There shall be an annual meeting of the League at such time in each year, and at such place as the General Committee may determine, at which officers shall be elected for the ensuing year, and other appropriate business may be transacted.

A meeting of the League may be called at the discretion of the General Committee whenever any association belonging to it notifies the Secretary of the League of its desire to have such meeting, and the President may at any time call a meeting of the League.

#### IX.

Any provision of this Constitution may be suspended or amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any meeting of the General Committee, due notice of such proposed suspension or amendment having been given at a previous meeting. Any association belonging to the League may, through its representatives, propose amendments to the Constitution which may be approved under the same conditions.

# PROCEEDINGS

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF

## THE NATIONAL CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE

HELD AT

CHICAGO, ILL., DEC. 12 AND 13, 1894.

WITH THE ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT,

HON. CARL SCHURZ,

AND OTHER MATTERS.

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NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED FOR THE  
NATIONAL CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE.

1894.



**WASHINGTON, D. C.:**  
**PRESS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT.**

**ANNUAL MEETING**  
**OF THE**  
**NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE.**

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**DECEMBER 12 AND 13, 1894.**

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Pursuant to call duly issued, the fourteenth Annual Meeting of the National Civil Service Reform League was held in Chicago, Ill., on the 12th and 13th of December, 1894. Among the delegates who were in more or less regular attendance during the several sessions were the following:

**BOSTON, MASS.:** Richard Henry Dana.

**BROOKLINE, MASS.:** Dana Estes.

**BROOKLYN, N. Y.:** William G. Low.

**BUFFALO, N. Y.:** Hon. Henry A. Richmond, John B. Olmsted, Frederic Almy, Hon. Charles B. Wheeler, Thomas Cary and Henry J. Wilkes.

**CAMBRIDGE, MASS.:** Philip S. Abbot.

**CONNECTICUT:** Gen. William A. Aiken and William Potts.

CHICAGO, ILL.: John W. Ela, Franklin MacVeagh, Adlai T. Ewing, Hon. Leroy B. Thoman, Hon. George E. Adams, Hon. Murray F. Tuley, William Kent, Harlan W. Cooley, Charles Deering, W. K. Ackerman, J. W. Brooks, Russell H. Curtis, Edward J. Phelps, Charles L. Hutchinson, George L. Paddock, proxy for Hon. Everett P. Wheeler, of New York ; James S. Norton, Edwin Burritt Smith, John H. Hamline, Oliver T. Morton, Frank H. Scott, Bryan Lathrop, E. O. Brown, C. R. Crane, E. A. Bancroft, J. J. Glessner, Murray Nelson and Cyrus H. Adams.

CINCINNATI: C. B. Wilby.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: F. L. Siddons.

INDIANA: Hon. William Dudley Foulke, Lucius B. Swift, Prof. Demarchus C. Brown and Evans Woollen.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY: Prof. J. W. Jenks.

MADISON, WIS.: Charles Kendall Adams and Charles Noble Gregory.

MARYLAND: Charles J. Bonaparte.

MILWAUKEE: J. R. Brigham, Gen. F. C. Winkler, Bernard Goldsmith and Prof. J. J. Mapel.

MISSOURI: Henry Hitchcock, Hon. C. P. Walbridge, J. C. Cabanne and Albert Blair.

NASHVILLE, TENN.: Herman Justi.

NEW YORK CITY: Hon. Carl Schurz, Col. Silas W. Burt, Frederick W. Holls and George McAneny.

PHILADELPHIA, PENN.: Herbert Welsh, R. Francis Wood, Charles Richardson, Clinton Rogers Woodruff, and Prof. E. J. James

In response to invitations extended by the League to affiliated bodies, delegates were also present from a number of such organizations, as follows:

NATIONAL BOARD OF TRADE: John A. Gano of Cincinnati, A. C. Raymond of Detroit, and Henry A. Richmond of Buffalo.

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER-CARRIERS:** J. C. Alton of Jamestown, N. Y., C. M. O'Brien of Cleveland, and John E. Hammond of Chicago.

**MUNICIPAL LEAGUE OF MILWAUKEE:** John A. Butler, J. E. Friend, J. R. Brigham and W. F. Nowell.

**MASSACHUSETTS REFORM CLUB:** Richard Henry Dana.

**REFORM CLUB, New York:** Charles Deering.

**MUNICIPAL ORDER LEAGUE, Chicago:** Mrs. I. M. Hornsey.

**PHILADELPHIA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE:** Herbert Welsh, R. Francis Wood, Charles Richardson and C. R. Woodruff.

Many of the delegates present from the Civil Service Reform Associations represented also the Anti-Spoils League.

The morning session of the 12th, commencing at 10.30 o'clock, was occupied by a joint meeting of the General and Executive Committees, held at the rooms of the Commerce Club in the Auditorium Building.

At 2.30 in the afternoon, an open meeting of the League was held at the Commerce Club, at which an address of welcome was delivered by the president of the Chicago Civil Service Reform League, Mr. John W. Ela, and the following papers were read:

“The Influence of the Spoils Idea upon the Government of American Cities.” Herbert Welsh.\*

“Citizenship and the Civil Service.” Hon. C. P. Walbridge, Mayor of St. Louis.†

“Municipal Reform Impossible under the Spoils System.” Chas. B. Wilby.‡

The annual address of the President, on “The Necessity and Progress of Civil Service Reform,” was delivered at Central Music Hall at 8 o'clock in the evening of the 12th, before a large audience. It is as follows:



# THE NECESSITY AND PROGRESS OF CIVIL SERVICE REFORM.

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*An Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the National Civil Service Reform League at Chicago, Ill.,  
December 12, 1894.*

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BY HON. CARL SCHURZ.

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This is the first time that the National Civil Service Reform League holds its annual meeting near the great Mississippi Valley; but we know that its cause is no stranger here. Not only has it in this region some of its most faithful advocates, but the practical sense and the public spirit which have wrought here such wonders, seem to produce the very atmosphere in which this cause should prosper; for Civil Service Reform is, in the sense of an enlightened, large and patriotic public spirit, a preëminently practical conception—practical in its principles, practical in its aims, and practical in its methods.

What Civil Service Reform demands, is simply that the business part of the Government shall be carried on in a sound, businesslike manner. This seems so obviously reasonable that among people of common sense there should be no two opinions about it. And the condition of things to be reformed is so obviously unreasonable, so flagrantly absurd and vicious, that we should not believe it could possibly exist among sensible people, had we not become accustomed to its existence among ourselves. In truth, we can hardly bring the whole exorbitance of that viciousness and absurdity

home to our own minds unless we contemplate it as reflected in the mirror of a simile.

Imagine, then, a bank the stockholders of which, many in number, are divided into two factions—let us call them the Jones party and the Smith party—who quarrel about some question of business policy, as, for instance, whether the bank is to issue currency or not. The Jones party is in control, but the Smith men persuade over to their side a sufficient number of Jones men to give them—the Smith men—a majority at the next stockholders' meeting. Thus they succeed in getting the upper hand. They oust the old board of directors, and elect a new board consisting of Smith men. The new Smith board at once remove all the officers, president, cashier, tellers, bookkeepers, and clerks down to the messenger boys—the good and the bad alike—simply because they are Jones men, and fill their places forthwith with new persons who are selected, not on the ground that they have in any way proved their fitness for the positions so filled, but simply because they are Smith men; and those of the Smith men who have shown the greatest zeal and skill in getting a majority of votes for the Smith party are held to have the strongest claims for salaried places in the bank. The new men struggle painfully with the duties novel to them until they acquire some experience, but even then it needs in many instances two men or more to do the work of one.

In the course of events dissatisfaction spreads among the stockholders with the Smith management, partly shared by ambitious Smith men who thought themselves entitled to reward in the shape of places and salaries, but were "left out in the cold." Now the time for a new stockholders' meeting arrives. After a hot fight the Jones party carries the day. Its ticket of directors being elected, off go the heads of the Smith president, the Smith cashier, the Smith tellers, the Smith bookkeepers and clerks, to be replaced by true-blue Jones men who have done the work of the campaign and are expected to do more of it when the next election comes. And so the career of the bank goes on with

its periodical changes of party in power at longer or shorter intervals, and its corresponding clean sweeps of the bank service, with mismanagement and occasional fraud and speculation as inevitable incidents.

You might watch the proceedings of such a banking concern with intense curiosity and amusement. But I ask you, what prudent man among you would deposit his money in it or invest in its stock? And why would you not? Because you would think that this is not sensible men's business, but foolish boys' play; that such management would necessarily result in reckless waste and dishonesty, and tend to land many of the bank's officers in Canada, and not a few of its depositors or investors in the poorhouse. Such would be your judgment, and in pronouncing it you would at the same time pronounce judgment upon the manner in which the business part of our national Government, as well as of many if not most of our State and municipal governments, has been conducted for several generations. This is the spoils system. And I have by no means presented an exaggerated or even a complete picture of it; nay, rather a mild sketch, indicating only with faint touches the demoralizing influences exercised by that system with such baneful effect upon the whole political life of the nation.

Looking at the financial side of the matter alone—it is certainly bad enough; it is indeed almost incomprehensible how the spoils system could be permitted through scores of years to vitiate our business methods in the conduct of the national revenue service, the postal service, the Indian service, the public-land service, involving us in indescribable administrative blunders, bringing about Indian wars, causing immense losses in the revenue, breeding extravagant and plundering practices in all Departments, costing our people in the course of time untold hundreds of millions of money, and making our Government one of the most wasteful in the world. All this, I say, is bad enough. It might be called discreditable enough to move any self-respecting people to shame. But the spoils system



has inflicted upon the American people injuries far greater than these.

The spoils system, that practice which turns public offices, high and low, from public trusts into objects of prey and booty for the victorious party, may without extravagance of language be called one of the greatest criminals in our history, if not the greatest. In the whole catalogue of our ills there is none more dangerous to the vitality of our free institutions.

It tends to divert our whole political life from its true aims. It teaches men to seek something else in politics than the public good. It puts mercenary selfishness as the motive power for political action in the place of public spirit, and organizes that selfishness into a dominant political force.

It attracts to active party politics the worst elements of our population, and with them crowds out the best. It transforms political parties from associations of patriotic citizens, formed to serve a public cause, into bands of mercenaries using a cause to serve them. It perverts party contests from contentions of opinion into scrambles for plunder. By stimulating the mercenary spirit it promotes the corrupt use of money in party contests and in elections.

It takes the leadership of political organizations out of the hands of men fit to be leaders of opinion and workers for high aims, and turns it over to the organizers and leaders of bands of political marauders. It creates the boss and the machine, putting the boss into the place of the statesman, and the despotism of the machine in the place of an organized public opinion.

It converts the public officeholder, who should be the servant of the people, into the servant of a party or of an influential politician, extorting from him time and work which should belong to the public, and money which he receives from the public for public service. It corrupts his sense of duty by making him understand that his obligation to his party or his political patron is equal if not superior to his obligation to the public interest, and that his continuance in office

does not depend on his fidelity to duty. It debauches his honesty by seducing him to use the opportunities of his office to indemnify himself for the burdens forced upon him as a party slave. It undermines in all directions the discipline of the public service.

It falsifies our constitutional system. It leads to the usurpation, in a large measure, of the executive power of appointment by members of the legislative branch, substituting their irresponsible views of personal or party interest for the judgment as to the public good, and the sense of responsibility of the executive. It subjects those who exercise the appointing power, from the President of the United States down, to the intrusion of hordes of office-hunters and their patrons, who rob them of the time and strength they should devote to the public interest. It has already killed two of our Presidents, one, the first Harrison, by worry, and the other, Garfield, by murder; and more recently it has killed a mayor in Chicago and a judge in Tennessee.

It degrades our Senators and Representatives in Congress to the contemptible position of office-brokers, and even of mere agents of office-brokers, making the business of dickering about spoils as weighty to them as their duties as legislators. It introduces the patronage as an agency of corrupt influence between the executive and the legislature. It serves to obscure the criminal character of bribery by treating bribery with offices as a legitimate practice. It thus reconciles the popular mind to practices essentially corrupt, and thereby debauches the popular sense of right and wrong in politics.

It keeps in high political places, to the exclusion of better men, persons whose only ability consists in holding a personal following by adroit manipulation of the patronage. It has thus sadly lowered the standard of statesmanship in public position, compared with the high order of ability displayed in all other walks of life.

It does more than anything else to turn our large municipalities into sinks of corruption, to render Tam-

many Halls possible, and to make of the police force here and there a protector of crime and a terror to those whose safety it is to guard. It exposes us, by the scandalous spectacle of its periodical spoils carnivals, to the ridicule and contempt of civilized mankind, promoting among our own people the growth of serious doubts as to the practicability of democratic institutions on a great scale, and in an endless variety of ways it introduces into our political life more elements of demoralization, debasement and decadence than any other agency of evil I know of, aye, perhaps more than all other agencies of evil combined.

These are some of the injuries the spoils system has been, and still is, inflicting upon this Republic—some, I say; not all, for it is impossible to follow its subtle virus into all the channels through which it exercises its poisonous influence. But I have said enough to illustrate its pernicious effects; and what I have said is only the teaching of sober observation and long experience.

And now, if such are the evils of the spoils system, what are, by way of compensation, the virtues it possesses, and the benefits it confers? Let its defenders speak. They do not pretend that it gives us a very efficient public service; but they tell us that it is essentially American; that it is necessary in order to keep alive among our people an active interest in public affairs; that frequent rotation in office serves to give the people an intelligent insight in the nature and workings of their Government; that without it parties cannot be held together, and party government is impossible; and that all the officers and employees of the Government should be in political harmony with the party in power. Let us pass the points of this defence in review one by one.

First, then, in what sense can the spoils system be called essentially American? Certainly not as to its origin. At the beginning of our national Government nothing like it was known here, or dreamed of. Had anything like it been proposed, the fathers of the

Republic would have repelled it with alarm and indignation. It did, indeed, prevail in England when the monarchy was much stronger than it is now, and when the aristocracy could still be called a ruling class. But as the British government grew more democratic, the patronage system, as a relic of feudalism, had to yield to the forces of liberalism and enlightenment until it completely disappeared. When it invaded our national Government, forty years after its constitutional beginning, we merely took what England was casting off as an abuse inconsistent with popular government, and unworthy of a free and civilized nation. If not in origin, is the spoils system essentially American in any other sense? Only in the sense in which murder is American, or smallpox, or highway robbery, or Tammany Hall.

As to the spoils system being necessary to the end of keeping alive among our people an active interest in public affairs—where is the American who does not blush to utter such an infamous calumny? Is there no patriotism in America without plunder in sight? Was there no public spirit before spoils systems and clean sweeps cursed us, none between the battle of Lexington and Jackson's inauguration as President? Such an argument deserves as an answer only a kick from every honest American boot.

I admit, however, that there are among us some persons whose interest in public affairs does need the stimulus of office to remain alive. I am far from denying that the ambition to serve one's country as a public officer is in itself a perfectly legitimate and honorable ambition. It certainly is. But when a man's interest in public affairs depends upon his drawing an official salary, or having such a salary in prospect, the ambition does not appear so honorable. There is too pungent a mercenary flavor about it. No doubt, even among the mercenaries may be found individuals that are capable, faithful and useful; but taking them as a class, the men whose active public spirit is conditional upon the possession or prospect of official spoil are those whose inter-

est in public affairs the commonweal can most conveniently spare. Indeed, our political life would be in a much healthier condition if they did not take any part in politics at all. There would be plenty of patriotic Americans to devote themselves to the public good without such a condition. In fact, there would be more of that class in regular political activity than there are now, for they would not be jostled out by the pushing hordes of spoils-hunters, whose real interest in public affairs is that of serving themselves. The spoils system is therefore not only not a stimulus of true public spirit, but in spreading the mercenary tendency among the people it has served to baffle and discourage true public spirit by the offensive infusion in political life of the mercenary element.

The view that the spoils system with its frequent rotations in office is needed to promote among the people a useful understanding of the nature and workings of the Government, finds, amazing as it may seem, still serious adherents among well-meaning citizens. It is based upon the assumption that the public service which is instituted to do certain business for the people, should at the same time serve as a school in which ignorant persons are to learn something about the functions of the Government. These two objects will hardly go together. If the public service is to do its business with efficiency and economy, it must of course be manned with persons fit for the work. If on the other hand it is to be used as a school to instruct ignorant people in the functions of the Government—that is, in the duties of a postmaster, or a revenue collector, or an Indian agent, or a Department clerk—then we should select for such places persons who know least about them, for they have the most to learn; and inasmuch as such persons, before having acquired the necessary knowledge, skill and experience, will inevitably do the public business in a bungling manner, and therefore at much inconvenience and loss to the people, they should, in justice to the taxpayers, instead of drawing salaries, pay something for the instruction they receive. For as soon as

they have learned enough really to earn a salary, they will have to be turned out to make room for others, who are as ignorant and in as great need of instruction as the outgoing set had been before. Evidently this kindergarten theory of the public service is hardly worth discussion. The school of the spoils system, as it has been in operation since 1829, has educated thousands of political loafers, but not one political sage.

That the Government will not work satisfactorily unless all its officers and employees are in political harmony with the ruling party, is also one of those superstitions which some estimable people have not yet been able to shake off. While they sternly resist the argument that there is no Democratic and no Republican way of sorting of letters, or of collecting taxes, or of treating Indians, as theoretical moonshine, their belief must, after all, have received a rude shock by the conduct of the last three national Administrations, including the present one.

When in 1885, after twenty-four years of Republican ascendancy, the Democrats came into power, President Cleveland determined that, as a general rule, officers holding places covered by the four-years-term law should, if they had conducted themselves irreproachably, be permitted to serve out their four-years terms. How strictly this rule was adhered to I will not now inquire. At any rate it was adhered to in a great many cases. Many Republican officeholders, under that four-years rule, remained in place one, or two, or three years under the Democratic Administration. President Harrison, succeeding Mr. Cleveland, followed a similar rule, although to a less extent. And now President Cleveland again does the same. Not only did we have during his first term the startling spectacle of the great postoffice of New York City remaining in the hands of a postmaster who was not a Democrat, but recently of the Collectorship of the port of New York, once considered the most important political office in the country, being left for a year or more in possession of a Republican.

It is clear, the Presidents who acted thus did not believe

that the public interest required all the officers of the Government to be in harmony with the party in power. On the contrary, they thought that the public interest was served by keeping efficient officers in their places, for a considerable time at least, although they were not in such harmony. And no doubt all sensible people admit that the common weal did not suffer therefrom. The theory of the necessity of political accord between the administrative officers of the Government and the party in power has thus been thoroughly exploded by actual practice and experience. Being obliged to admit this, candid men, it is to be hoped, will go a step farther in their reasoning. If those two Presidents were right in thinking that the public welfare was served by keeping meritorious officers not belonging to the ruling party in place until they had served four years, is it not wrong to deprive the country of the services of such men, made especially valuable by their accumulated experience and the training of their skill, by turning them out after the lapse of the four years? If it was for the public interest to keep them so long, is it not against the public interest not to keep them longer?

This observance of the four-years-term law has the great merit of conclusively demonstrating, from the point of view of the public interest, the utter absurdity and viciousness of the law itself. And I fervently hope that the repeal of the law will before long follow this demonstration.

The question whether the spoils system, or whether the distribution of offices among its members, will make a political party strong or, which is practically the same thing, save it from defeat, has been answered by recent events in so drastic a fashion as to shake the faith even of the most inveterate spoilsman. When he remembers that the Republicans with all the offices, except the classified service, in their hands, were defeated in 1884, that the Democrats with all the offices in their hands were defeated in 1888, that the Republicans again with all the offices in their hands were defeated in 1892, and that all the offices in Christendom

could not have saved the Democrats from defeat this autumn—when he remembers this he may even begin to suspect that in our days the possession of the spoils, like the Nibelungen ring, must be attended with some mysterious fatality—a curse that attaches itself to ill-gotten good. Such a belief would not lack reason. There is the old and truthful story that the bestowal of every office as a favor makes one ingrate and ten enemies. Besides, the very aspect of the distribution of offices in the spoils-carnival way, with the gross mistakes inseparable from such a barbarous method, begins to be so disgusting to a great and constantly increasing number of good citizens, that it goes far to turn away their affection and confidence from the party responsible for it. And this counts for much, especially in times like ours, when the habit of independent thinking in politics is visibly weakening the bonds of party allegiance.

How do you explain the frequent so-called tidal waves which overturn now this and now the other party in rapidly alternating succession? It is not that the people have become more fickle in their purposes, but that they look more to the accomplishment of certain public objects, and less to mere party success; that they are becoming more critical as to the fulfillment of party pledges, and as to compliance with the requirements of good government, and that the thought of punishing his own party for misconduct or failure in meeting legitimate expectations is fast losing its terrors to the conscience of a party man. This is, as I think, a very promising condition of the popular mind. It marks a decided progress of the moral revival in our political life. I have never known a time when parties were so distinctly put on their good behavior as they are now; and, what is equally encouraging, they both seem to know it.

Under such circumstances it has an almost ludicrous sound when people still assert that parties must be, or can be, held together by the spoils of office, the “cohesive power of public plunder.” The public mind, on the contrary, is fast accepting the opposite



maxim, that when a political party has to rely upon the spoils to hold it together, it is high time that it should dissolve ; because in the same measure as it needs the spoils as a means of cohesion, it ceases to be an instrument of public usefulness, and becomes a nuisance and a public danger.

A kindred question is, whether party government can be carried on, and more especially, whether an Administration can get along with Congress, without the use of the patronage. A discussion of this subject among Civil Service Reformers not long ago attracted wide attention. Mr. Josiah Quincy, as First Assistant Secretary of State, having the consular appointments in charge, had, during the first months of the present Administration, made an almost clean sweep of that branch of the service, removing Republicans from consulships and putting Democrats in their places with unprecedented vivacity. When speaking of Mr. Quincy's doings, I do not mean to ignore the President's responsibility in authorizing what was done ; but Mr. Quincy, bearing the reputation of a friend of Reform, was the official adviser and became the defender of it. I speak of him as such. At a meeting of the Massachusetts Reform Club he explained his conduct, which had greatly shocked his friends, saying " that the personnel of the service had been decidedly improved by the changes made, taken as a whole, and that the methods of making appointments outside of the scope of the Civil Service Law could not be suddenly changed by any Administration so as to conform to the ideas of advanced Civil Service Reformers, without almost disrupting the political party which it represents, and destroying its influence with Congress." This is, as I understand, Mr. Quincy's own statement of the case.

I am sure I do him no injustice when I say that, in order to avoid the danger of following the ideas of the advanced Civil Service Reformers, he followed the practice of the most advanced spoilsmen ; for no spoilsman in that office has ever turned over the consular service from one party to the other with greater

thoroughness and despatch. Nor am I doing him injustice in saying that he defends his course upon the exact grounds upon which professional spoilsmen in his position have always defended theirs: that the service was improved by the changes made—they always say that—and that the harmony of the party and the interests of the Administration required those changes—which they always say, too. In all this Mr. Quincy and the spoilsmen agree. For when Mr. Quincy speaks of not “disrupting the party” and of “preserving the influence of the Administration with Congress,” it means, stripped of euphonious circumlocution, simply this, that he took consulships from Republicans and gave them to Democrats to hold the party together by feeding it with patronage, and to win for the Administration the votes of members of Congress by giving them consulships for their friends and supporters. This is clear.

There was a time when in England prominent men openly avowed the doctrine that corruption was an indispensable agency in constitutional government—that without corruption constitutional government would not work—and when, with little exaggeration, the prime minister, or his agent, was described as walking about in the House of Commons with his pockets full of banknotes to be distributed among members for the purpose of “preventing the disruption of the party,” and of “preserving the influence of the Administration” with Parliament—in other words, of buying votes. When we read of this our moral sense is greatly shocked, and we are loath to admit that such a shameful state of demoralization could find a valid excuse in the loose notions and habits of the time.

Well, what is the difference between this and Mr. Quincy walking about among Senators and Representatives with consulships in his pockets to distribute them for the purpose of preventing “the disruption of the party,” and of preserving “the influence of the Administration with Congress”? The banknotes, to be sure, were downright money; but are not consulships money’s worth to members of Congress? In either case—win-

ning votes with money, or with money's worth—what else is it, to call it by its right name, than bribery? And what is the excuse with us? That it has long been a custom, and that it cannot be broken off without the risk of disrupting the party and of destroying the influence of the Administration with Congress. Was I not right in saying that the spoils system had so blunted and debauched the popular sense of right and wrong in politics as to reconcile many otherwise decent people to practices essentially corrupt? If this is one of the prevailing notions of the time with us, it cannot cease to be so too soon.

Mr. Quincy seems to think so too, for he said on the same occasion that he favored the enactment of a law placing the consular service under regulations protecting it against being used as he has used it. I am also warmly in favor of such legislation. But in England the corrupt practice mentioned was stopped, and the loose notion of the time was broken without a restraining law—by the courageous moral sense of men in power. Would not Mr. Quincy be more satisfied with himself now, had he at least made a beginning in the same direction while he had the power?

Looking at the matter, not from the moral point of view, but from that of practical politics—what has been accomplished? Has, in point of fact, all this manipulation of the patronage saved the party from disruption, and has it given the Administration smooth sailing in Congress? In the light of recent events it may have dawned upon Mr. Quincy that he would have not only served his country better, but also his party and the Administration, had he been less afraid of the ideas of advanced Civil Service Reformers, and had he bent all his talents and energies to the task of giving the country a consular service in the highest degree fitted to minister to the wants of American commerce, and to do honor to the American name abroad, by preserving and encouraging all that was good in the consular force then existing, by weeding out only what was bad, and by devising the best possible methods for ascertaining, not

the political claims or influence, but the character and business qualifications of the applicants for vacant places. Had he done this his party would certainly not be more defeated than it now is; the Administration would not have had more trouble with Congress than it has had, but both would stand before the country in a position far more desirable than they do. Let us hope that after such a proof of its practical futility, as well as its bad morals, this exhibition of the old spoils methods in the consular department, as it was the worst, may also have been the last.

As to the general policy, I have had opportunities for observing events under no less than ten Administrations, and I have never known the patronage to be extensively used for the purpose of pushing a policy by winning votes in Congress, without giving the Administration concerned far more trouble than influence, and without making for it more enemies than friends. It may capture the support of a man here and there, but it will always in a larger circle stir up jealousy, heart-burnings and bitterness, and it will so stimulate the mercenary spirit in Congress that at last the Administration can hardly obtain any support for anything without paying for it at the expense of its conscience and its honor.

The ordinary spoilsman cannot be permanently propitiated unless he gets everything he wishes. You try to please him by giving him the disposal of an ambassadorship, but he will become your enemy if you refuse him a small postoffice. And the appetite grows with the eating. No Administration can sufficiently satisfy that appetite to secure the reliable good will of the greedy without utter moral ruin and disgrace. This is the teaching of history.

Thus all the pretended political advantages ascribed to the spoils system dwindle into nothing; nay, on candid scrutiny they appear as added curses. It offers not the slightest compensation for the wasteful misrule, the sickening demoralization, and the appalling dangers to our free institutions which it brings in its train. It is

so unmitigated an evil, so barbarous an anachronism, so utterly unfit for a civilized, self-respecting, and patriotic people, that we must wonder how it ever could throw root or be tolerated in this great and proud Republic.

And yet we have to face the fact that there are still strong and stubborn forces standing behind it. There is the *vis inertiae* of habit which persuades slow-thinking people that what has been so long must continue to be. There is the multitude of those afflicted with an almost morbid desire for public office as a sort of distinction and an easy means of support, to be had as a present for the asking. There are the political speculators who see in spoils politics opportunities for pelf. There are the political wire-pullers who know no other politics than dicker and trade, and whom the abolition of the spoils system would deprive of their occupation. There are the members of legislatures, and of Congress, and the Governors and other officials who feel that they cannot sustain themselves in public life by their ability as statesmen, and fall back upon the tricks of the patronage jobber to continue their superfluous public existence. There is the cowardice of the politician in high place who prays to be delivered of the burden and annoyance of the patronage, but whose courage collapses as soon as a constituent asks him for an office. And last but not least, there is the power of the party organizations that have the prestige of regularity and that are almost exclusively controlled by spoils politicians.

All these elements combined surely make a strong force, and this force has for years desperately contested every inch of ground against the onward movement of Reform. But on the other hand the friends of Reform rejoice to know that on their side a power is rising up with constantly increasing strength, to which in a free country eventually everything must yield—the power of public opinion. And this power has never made itself felt as strongly as now. It is not the mere critical fault-finding of the political philosopher, not a mere sentimental cry for something ideal, that makes itself heard.

It is the voice of the sober-minded citizen who may long have regarded the Civil Service Reformer as a visionary, but who now by stern experience has been made aware that something is essentially wrong in the practical working of our institutions, and that a remedy is urgently called for.

So we hear from all sides expressions of disgust at the scandalous spectacle of the spoils-carnival with every change of party in power, and the reckless distribution of public offices among political workers undeserving of honor and confidence. One public man in high station after another declares that the position of spoils-jobbers to which they are degraded puts upon them intolerable burdens, and that it must cease. In all parts of the country chambers of commerce, boards of trade and individual merchants protest that so many of our consulates abroad have long enough been held by incompetents, who merely wish to spend some time in foreign lands for their health or to get good music lessons for their daughters, that it is time we should cease to make such offices the laughing-stock and contempt of foreign nations, and that at last only men should be sent out known to be fit to serve the interests of our commerce as the consuls of our commercial competitors serve theirs. But, more significant than all this, where government comes nearest home to the individual citizen, its abuses have stirred up the strongest feeling. The people of some of our great municipalities are crying out that they have been scandalously misgoverned and robbed and oppressed by organized bands of mercenary politicians, who by hook or crook obtain complete possession of the municipal governments, or at least exercise a pernicious influence in them, and that there must be an end of this.

Nor are these complaints brought forth without the suggestion of a remedy. In every instance they are accompanied with the demand that the branch of the public service complained of—national, State, or municipal—must be “taken out of politics.”

Never has the popular instinct hit the nail on the head

more squarely than by this demand. For what does it mean to take a public function out of politics? It means simply that with regard to all the public offices and employments concerned, rules for appointment and promotion be introduced which rigidly exclude political and personal favoritism, and secure places and preferment only to those who in some prescribed manner establish the superiority of their mental and moral fitness for the work to be done.

For a place in the administrative part of the Government not the mere henchman of some party leader or committee, but he who proves himself better qualified for the duties of the office than his competitors; for the consular service, not a mere political drummer or a man who has put some member of Congress under political obligation, but he who proves himself especially well versed in commercial affairs and law, and in command of the other necessary equipments for the performance of consular duty; for the police force, not a mere graduate of a whiskey-shop whom some party boss or ward-heeler wishes to wield the police club, but he who is found in point of moral character, as well as mental and physical qualifications, to be a person of superior fitness for the duties of a policeman; and for promotion in the service, not the mere favorite of some political magnate or of his wife or daughter, but he who has shown that he deserves that promotion by superior capacity, efficiency, and fidelity to duty! This is what it means to take public functions out of politics. And this is the merit system. This is Civil Service Reform.

Its methods are as simple as the principle itself, and their efficacy has been proved by experience. It has long passed the stage of mere experiment. Since the enactment of the Civil Service Law in 1883, the system has been in uninterrupted operation under the national Government, and there are now about 50,000 places in the national service covered by the Rules established under that Law. The bulk of these places are those of the clerical force of various grades, in the Departments in Washington, in the Railway Mail Service, in the lar-

ger custom-houses and postoffices in the country, and in the Indian service. Appointments to these places are made only after examinations which are accessible to all, and which subject the qualifications of the applicants for the places to be filled to appropriate tests. These examinations are, with few exceptions, competitive—that is to say, only candidates who come out at the head of the list are certified for appointment. They are appointed at first only for a probationary period, and if they prove themselves efficient, the appointment is made final. From the whole proceeding political considerations are rigidly excluded. Inquiry into the party affiliation of the candidate is prohibited. Political recommendations are not accepted. There the machine boss, the party magnate or committee, have nothing to say. And in the offices so manned Democrats, Republicans and Independents work harmoniously together, each one relying upon his efficiency in the discharge of official duty for continuance in office and for preferment.

Neither is the success of the system in increasing the efficiency of the service any longer a matter of the slightest doubt. Not only has one Department chief after another—even those who had begun to test it with a prejudice against its practicability—in the strongest terms borne witness to its beneficial results, many of them declaring that they did not see how without it they could satisfactorily do the business of their Departments, but there are instances in which its usefulness, aye, its indispensableness, can be demonstrated by figures. One such instance is the Railway Mail Service, which attends to the sorting and distributing of mail matter on railway trains in motion. The high importance of this branch of the postal service to the business of the country, which needs not only a safe but a prompt transmission of letters, requires no elucidation. The Railway Mail clerk, especially on the great through routes where the mass of mail matter is bewilderingly great, has a task to perform which demands not only considerable knowledge of the geography of the country, but also that



quickness of mind which makes such knowledge always available in a hurry, and withal much experience and dexterity. The Post Office Department keeps a minute account of the errors committed by each clerk on his route, and this account enters into his record.

The Republicans having been in power for twenty-four years, the Railway Mail Service consisted in 1885 of pretty well trained men. At that period there occurred, as recorded, one error to every 5,575 pieces of mail matter handled. But in 1885 the Democrats came into power, and the Railway Mail Service not being then under the Civil Service Rules, they pounced upon it as a part of the spoils of victory. Instantly the number of errors rose to the proportion of one to every 4,228 pieces of mail matter handled, and as the partisan changes in the service continued, in the following year to the proportion of one to 3,364. The new men becoming more experienced, the proportion improved again, until in 1889 it reached one error to 3,954. At the close of his Administration President Cleveland put the Railway Mail Service under the Civil Service Rules, the order to take effect some time after the beginning of his successor's term of office. But the Republicans, returning to power, availed themselves, with Mr. Wanamaker's — the Postmaster-General's — coöperation, of the intervening period to treat the railway clerkships as party spoils once more. Instantly the number of errors increased again, reaching the proportion of one to 2,834. Meanwhile, the Civil Service Rules went into force, and, although there was another change of party in power in 1893, the proportion of errors for that year fell to the unprecedentedly favorable proportion of only one to 7,144. And Postmaster-General Bissell hopes to see the proportion of errors reduced to one in 10,000 before he leaves office. This is practical Civil Service Reform in one of the most important branches of the public service, demonstrated by figures.

Other branches would show like results did the nature of their business permit a similar mathematical demonstration. A member of the United States Civil Service

Commission informs me that of the many thousands of men appointed upon competitive examination only 2 per cent. have failed to maintain the expected degree of efficiency; and, what is certainly no less important, that the number of persons among them who turned out to be dishonest has been so small as hardly to deserve notice.

But there is one point which demands the especial attention of American womanhood. The number of women employed in various capacities in the national service is very large. Under the spoils system almost every one of them owed not only her appointment, but also her continuance in office, to the recommendation, or, as it was called, to the "influence," of some man influential in party politics—in Washington usually a Senator or a Representative in Congress. With that "influence" behind her she could expect to stay in the place upon which, in most cases, depended her bread and butter. When that influence was for any reason withdrawn, she was in danger of being dismissed to make room for another woman only because that other woman had the necessary influence behind her. Surely to the most estimable women in the service—among them always women of the highest traditions and breeding—such a relation of dependence upon the favor of individual men must have been distasteful in the extreme. I need not point out the abuses which such a state of things was apt to bring forth, in order to show that the introduction of the merit system doing away with political influence was equivalent to the emancipation of the women in the service from a dependence so singularly unsuitable and so galling. Now they may be proudly conscious of the assurance that they hold their places by virtue of their own merit, and that their own merit is all the protection they need. I, therefore, commend to the high-minded women of America the cause of Civil Service Reform as a cause in which they have an especial interest. All women having the dignity of their sex at heart should be Civil Service Reformers, and resent as an insult to those of their sex

holding positions under the Government, everything that threatens a return to the old system or that impedes the extension of the new.

Since the establishment of this National League it has been customary to present in the annual address of its president a review of the progress of the Reform and of the manner in which its principles have been observed by those in power. This League is essentially a non-partisan organization. Among its members are Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and, for aught I know, Populists, who cultivate whatever party affiliations they may choose with perfect freedom, and are united only in a common endeavor for one common object. In the pursuit of this object they judge and criticise the conduct of political parties, and of Presidents, Department chiefs and other public officers, only from one point of view—that of Civil Service Reform principles; and if this judgment is to be of any value, it must with entire impartiality and justice, without fear or favor, apply to one party and its leaders the same rule that it applies to the other.

Certainly it is delightful to commend and praise, and it is irksome and distasteful to blame. But if praise is to have any weight, it must give evidence of that discrimination which proves it to be based upon a due valuation of the facts. Moreover, as spokesmen of this great cause, we are not permitted to declare ourselves fully satisfied with a mere partial fulfillment of its demands. We have to hold up the true standard. We cannot afford to suffer anything that remains below that standard to pass, unchallenged, as the Civil Service Reform we are aiming at. We certainly recognize the difficulties to be overcome, but we must insist that they be overcome. We certainly are thankful for every advance made; but we are bound to point out the further advance still to be made. It is, therefore, no disposition to be fault-finding or querulous if our commendation is accompanied with criticism. It is only a recognition of the plain and imperative duty we owe to our cause, and from that duty no displeasure of those criticised can swerve us.

First, then, what is the attitude of our great political parties as to Civil Service Reform? Both have made in their platforms most emphatic protestations and pledges in favor of the merit system, but neither has held those pledges to be of the same binding force as its pledges with regard to other subjects. In each party Civil Service Reform has warm friends, and in each it has bitter enemies. On each side we find a great crowd of politicians who are far more in favor of Civil Service Reform when they are in the opposition than when they are in power. What they loudly censure when in opposition, they do themselves with alacrity when the spoils fall to them. Neither party can therefore be called a Reform party. But neither would like to be looked upon as the opponent of Reform. There are politicians enough in each burning to repeal the Civil Service Law, and periodically such attempts are made in Congress, as well as attempts merely to disturb its operation, or to filch a few places from its domain. But these attempts grow gradually weaker, the prospect of a repeal of the Law becomes more and more hopeless, the politicians recognize more and more the necessity of submitting to the increasing force of public sentiment; and the political parties, after having plunged and kicked like unbroken mustangs, will soon pull quietly in the Reform harness, public opinion holding the reins.

The present Congress, some partisan efforts in the contrary direction notwithstanding, has already done something substantial for the Reform in giving to the United States Civil Service Commission, so far obliged to go begging to the several Departments for help, its own clerical force, which has greatly increased its working capacity, and is reported to be a model of organization, discipline and efficiency.

In reviewing the course of the present Administration I shall begin with its shortcomings, and then pass to the services it has rendered to our cause. While the so-called Presidential offices as well as the postoffices filled by the action of the Postmaster-General are not covered by the Civil Service Law, yet it was naturally assumed that an

Administration aspiring to the title of a Reform Administration would, with regard to those places, do what in 1888 the Republican platform pledged the party and its candidate to do when it said "that the spirit and purpose of Reform should be observed in all executive appointments." This could mean only that all the offices filled by executive appointment should cease to be party spoils, and that the non-political service should be given the character of a non-partisan service. How President Harrison failed to redeem that clear and emphatic pledge was at the time set forth by my lamented predecessor, George William Curtis—blessed be his memory—in words to which I have nothing to add.

But it was hoped that President Cleveland, who owed his elevation largely to the popular belief that he stood high above the ordinary politician's aspirations and practices, and who therefore enjoyed the advantage of an unusually independent position, would abstain from changes in the service not required by the public interest, or at least follow in a larger number of cases the great example set by himself at the beginning of his first administration when he reappointed Mr. Pearson as postmaster of New York, irrespective of his party standing, merely in recognition of his fidelity and efficiency in the management of his office. This hope has so far not been fulfilled. The interference of members of Congress with the appointing power has been largely tolerated, and President Cleveland, like his predecessor, has been exposed to sharp animadversions as to the reasons for which favors in the way of appointments were granted or withheld.

It must not be overlooked, however, that, excepting the headlong overturning of the consular service, the changes have, on the whole, been less rapid than under the preceding Administration. The President's adherence to the four-years rule has had the beneficial effect of mitigating the scandals of the clean sweep, and of familiarizing politicians with the experience of seeing in federal office men not in political harmony with the party in power. It has also, as before remarked, had

the merit of furnishing a most striking demonstration of the inherent absurdity and viciousness of the four-years rule itself by this very observance of it.

The same may be said of the application of that rule by the Postmaster-General to the fourth-class postmasters. But the result of this proceeding, if further adhered to, will after all be to put, before the close of the Presidential term, all the offices concerned into the hands of the party in power, and to leave so far to the service an essentially partisan character. It will have been a clean sweep—shamefaced and executed with evidences of a troubled conscience, but for all that a provocation to the party next coming into power to respond with another clean sweep in the opposite interest, and so on, *ad infinitum*, until we get a President who immortalizes himself by boldly breaking the vicious succession. We certainly do not fail to appreciate the fact that the President as well as the Postmaster-General, by doing as much as they did, have incurred the bitter hostility of the disappointed spoils-seekers and their friends. But that hostility would hardly have been more bitter or dangerous had the disappointment been greater. At the same cost of popularity and the same peril, the President and the Postmaster-General might have gone one step farther in order to leave to their successors as a great example and precedent a service not strictly partisan and not provoking another clean sweep as a retaliatory measure. But the end of this Administration is not yet, and there are reasons for hoping that its second half will be the most productive of good.

As to the observance of the Civil Service Law in the several Departments of the national Government, the Treasury Department under Mr. Carlisle has, I regret to say, won an unenviable distinction. Beginning with an act of gross nepotism, his management has not only furnished the strongest proof of the necessity of putting the chiefs of division under the Civil Service Rules, so as to protect those places, in the manifest interest of the service, against the encroachments of spoils politics, but in the matter of removals, reductions and promo-

tions shifts have been resorted to which, without perhaps violating the letter of the law, have run counter to its spirit in a manner but too well calculated to impair among the subordinates that reliance upon fidelity and efficiency for continuance in office and for promotion which is indispensable to uphold the morale of the force, and which prevails everywhere else in the classified service. In this respect the Treasury Department under Mr. Carlisle has conspicuously fallen below the standard maintained by his predecessors since the enactment of the Civil Service Law.

In other Departments a very gratifying progress is to be observed—notably in the Indian-school service of the Interior Department, whose superintendent, Mr. Hailmann, has recognized in the Civil Service Law the best friend of his endeavors; in the Agricultural Department under Secretary Morton, where the Civil Service Reform spirit has made perceptible advances; in the Navy Department, where Secretary Herbert, without being bound by the Civil Service Law, has faithfully maintained the non-partisan labor system introduced by his predecessor Mr. Tracy; and especially in the Post Office Department, which has been conducted by the Postmaster-General, Mr. Bissell, as to the observance of the Law, in a manner entitled to the highest credit. While he subjected himself to criticism by too great leniency with postmasters who at the moment of the passage of their offices under the Civil Service Rules filled the places under them with partisan favorites in the old spoils fashion, not even the most captious censor will find fault with his treatment of the classified service under him. He has made every person in that service feel the most confident assurance that in the truest sense of the term merit is the only title to appointment, security of tenure, and promotion. He has introduced a most valuable practice in requiring charges to be filed against accused persons, and giving them a chance to be heard. He has made in his Department not merely the letter but the spirit of the Law a living reality. Also outside of the scope of the Civil Service Law he has vigorously sought

to enforce that spirit by a Department order warning postmasters to occupy themselves with their official business and not with politics—an order which, as he himself says, has not only cleared away existing misconceptions, but also “produced a most favorable and permanent improvement in the efficiency of the service, which is daily evinced in many ways.” And now he has in his official report, in language of singular clearness and energy, demonstrated the absolute necessity, from the business point of view, of taking the whole Post Office Department completely out of politics, and warmly recommended the enactment of a law withdrawing the appointments to the fourth-class postoffices, now numbering over 66,000, altogether from partisan influence. The value of this brave utterance, which does great honor to Mr. Bissell, cannot be overestimated. Whether his recommendation be immediately carried out or not, its influence will not die, and in the course of time, perhaps before long, it will surely find its realization.

On the whole, it must in justice be said that, its shortcomings notwithstanding, President Cleveland’s second Administration has materially advanced the Reform cause. The President not only, when entering upon his office, invited Mr. Roosevelt, whose ability, zeal, watchfulness and fearless energy have long been of conspicuous value in that position, to remain a member of the Civil Service Commission, but he has further strengthened the Commission by filling a welcome vacancy in it by the appointment of Mr. Procter, a Civil Service Reformer of tried earnestness and judgment.

He has by recent orders extended the operation of the Civil Service Rules over several thousands of public servants who, until then, had stood outside of them. By the same orders he has effectually shut off many of the facilities which formerly existed for evading and circumventing the Law. Further enlargements are soon to follow. He has done these things in the second year of his term, while formerly it seemed to be the Presidential custom to order such extensions only in the expiring hours by way of last will and testament. And beyond this, he has caused



the partisan activity of public officers very much to decrease, so that at present there is far less of this abuse than at any time since the Civil Service Law went in force.

These are improvements the great value of which no Civil Service Reformer will fail to appreciate. Nor will any fair-minded man deny that, despite such isolated delinquencies as we witness at present in the Treasury Department, the Civil Service Law has under the national Government on the whole been faithfully enforced—more faithfully perhaps than any law ever was enforced that had so much of adverse interest and popular habit to encounter.

But the national Government is not the only field on which Civil Service Reform has achieved its success. In Massachusetts, that State to whose enlightened public spirit the country owes so much of valuable example, a Civil Service law is in wholesome operation, comprehending not only the State service, but also that of the large municipalities. One of the most important features of the Massachusetts system consists in the registration of laborers, enabling the laboring man, if he is fit for it, to obtain public employment without subjecting himself to the tyranny of partisan control or becoming a slavish tool of a party machine—a system which cannot be too carefully studied by those interested in municipal reform. In Massachusetts it has worked so satisfactorily to the community, as well as to the laboring men themselves, that, as I am informed, in spite of the ever unsatisfied appetites of the spoils politicians, no political party would now dare openly to countenance its overthrow.

In New York, too, there has been a Civil Service law on the statute-book, covering the service of the State as well as that of the larger cities. It was enacted in 1883 under Mr. Cleveland's Governorship, and put in operation by him in good faith. But the lamb was at the tender mercies of the wolf while David B. Hill and Roswell P. Flower occupied the Governor's chair. The violations and evasions of the law became at last so daring and shameless, that at the instance of the Civil Ser-

vice Reform Associations the State Senate ordered an inquiry, which mercilessly laid bare the misdoings of the unfaithful stewards. In the cities of Brooklyn, Buffalo, and, more recently, in Albany, the law has been loyally carried out by friendly authorities, and is bearing excellent fruit. In New York City it fell into the hands of Tammany Hall, and I need not describe the sport that band of political sharpers made of it. The decalogue itself would become a farce if left for enforcement to the devil. But the arch-enemy of Reform, David B. Hill, now rests under a monumental mountain of condemning votes; on the 1st of January next Roswell P. Flower will cease to be Governor of the State, and Tammany rule will end in the city of New York. And then the Civil Service Law, revived by the voice of the people, will there also become a living and beneficent force.

Indeed, in the State of New York the Reform cause has recently won a triumph that is unique. The late constitutional convention proposed the embodiment in the State constitution of a clause making the introduction of the competitive merit system in the State and municipal service obligatory; the people have ratified the amendment, and thus in New York Civil Service Reform has obtained the sanction of a constitutional mandate.

But all these evidences of progress I regard as of less importance than the strength our cause has gained in public sentiment. Of this we had a vivid illustration when a year ago, upon the motion of Mr. Richard Watson Gilder, the Anti-Spoils League was set on foot for the purpose of opening communication and facilitating correspondence and, in case of need, concert of action with the friends of Civil Service Reform throughout the country, and when, in a short space of time, about 10,000 citizens sent in their adhesion, representing nearly every State and Territory of the Union, and, in them, the most enlightened and influential classes of society.

More encouraging still is the circumstance that now for the first time we welcome at our annual meeting not

only the familiar faces of old friends, but also representatives of other organizations—Good Government clubs, working for the purification of politics; municipal leagues, whose aim is the reform of municipal governments; and commercial bodies, urging the reform of our consular service. We welcome them with especial warmth, for their presence proves that at last the true significance of Civil Service Reform is being appreciated in constantly widening circles. The Good Government club understands that if the moral tone of our politics, national or local, is to be lifted up, the demoralizing element of party spoil must be done away with. The Municipal League understands that if our large municipalities are to be no longer cesspools of corruption, if our municipal governments are to be made honest and businesslike, if our police forces are to be kept clear of thugs and thieves, the appointments to places in the municipal service must be withdrawn from the influence of party bosses and ward ruffians, and must be strictly governed by the merit system. The merchants understand that if our consular service is to be an effective help to American commerce, and a credit to the American name, it must not be subject to periodical partisan lootings, and our consuls must not be appointed by way of favor to some influential politician, but upon a methodical ascertainment of their qualifications for the consular business; then to be promoted according to merit, and also to be salaried as befits respectable agents and representatives of a great nation. With this understanding, every Good Government club, every Municipal League, every Chamber of Commerce or Board of Trade must be an active Civil Service Reform Association. But more than this. Every intelligent and unprejudiced citizen, when he candidly inquires into the developments which have brought about the present state of things, will understand that of the evils which have so alarmingly demoralized our political life, and so sadly lowered this Republic in the respect of the world, many, if not most, had their origin, and find their sustenance, in that practice which treats the pub-

lic offices as the plunder of victorious parties ; that as, with the increase of our population, the growth of our wealth, and the multiplication of our public interests, the functions of government expand and become more complicated, those evils will grow and eventually destroy the very vitality of our free institutions, unless their prolific source be stopped ; and that this source can be effectually stopped not by mere occasional spasms of indignant virtue, but only by a systematic, thorough and permanent reform. Every patriotic citizen understanding this must be a Civil Service Reformer.

You may ask how far this understanding has penetrated our population. President Cleveland answers this question in his recent message. Listen to what he says: "The advantages to the public service of an adherence to the principles of Civil Service Reform are constantly more apparent, and nothing is so encouraging to those in official life who honestly desire good government, as the increasing appreciation by our people of these advantages. A vast majority of the voters of the land are ready to insist that the time and attention of those they select to perform for them important public duties should not be distracted by doling out minor offices, and they are growing to be unanimous in regarding party organization as something that should be used in establishing party principles instead of dictating the distribution of public places as rewards for partisan activity."

With gladness I welcome this cheering assurance, coming from so high an authority. If such is the sense of "a vast majority of the voters of the land, growing to be unanimous," it may justly be called the will of the people. If it is the will of the people, what reason—nay, what excuse—can there be for further hesitation? Let the will of the people be done! Let it be done without needless delay, and let the people's President lead in doing it! Then no more spoils and plunder! No more removals not required by public interest! No more appointments for partisan reasons! Continuance in office, regardless of any four-years rule, of meritori-

ous public servants ! Superior merit the only title to preferment ! No longer can this be airily waved aside as a demand of a mere sect of political philosophers, for now it is recognized as the people's demand. No longer can Civil Service Reform be cried down by the so-called practical politicians as the nebulous dream of unpractical visionaries, for it has been grasped by the popular understanding as a practical necessity—not to enervate our political life, but to lift it to a higher moral plane ; not to destroy political parties, but to restore them to their legitimate functions ; not to make party government impossible, but to guard it against debasement, and to inspire it with higher ambitions ; not pretending to be in itself the consummation of all reforms, but being the Reform without which other reformatory efforts in government cannot be permanently successful.

Never, gentlemen, have we met under auspices more propitious. Let no exertion be spared to make the voice of the people heard. For when it is heard in its strength it will surely be obeyed.

## MEETING OF THE LEAGUE.

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COMMERCE CLUB, December 13, 1894—10 30 A. M.

The President took the chair.

The first business in order being the election of a president for the ensuing year, Mr. Wood of Philadelphia nominated Hon. Carl Schurz, and moved that the Secretary be instructed to cast one ballot for the nominee on the part of the League. There being no other nominations Mr. Wood put the question to the meeting: it was carried unanimously, and Mr. Schurz was declared duly elected.

After expressing his appreciation of the continued confidence of the League, the President announced the election of vice presidents to be in order, stating that two vacancies have been caused in the present list by the death, during the year, of Mr. John Jay of New York and Mr. Severn Teackle Wallis of Baltimore. Mr. William Potts of Farmington, Conn.—Secretary of the League since its organization, excepting during a brief period of public official service—and Mr. J. Hall Pleasants of Baltimore were nominated by Mr. Dana and Mr. Bonaparte respectively, to fill the existing vacancies. On motion of Mr. Dana it was voted that the Secretary cast the vote of the League for the election of the gentlemen nominated, and for the reëlection of the present vice presidents, and the Secretary did so.

Mr. Estes reported from the Auditing Committee appointed by the General Committee, that the accounts and vouchers of the Treasurer, as submitted in the report of that officer to the General Committee, had been examined and found to be correct.\*

Mr. Welsh, on behalf of the Finance Committee, suggested that the existing plan of raising funds by

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assessments upon the Associations be abandoned, and the League create, or seek to create, individual memberships with dues of \$1 per annum. Mr. Estes suggested also that all subscribers to *Good Government* might be received as individual members under such an arrangement. On motion of Mr. Siddons, the matter was referred to the Finance Committee with power to adopt either or both of the plans suggested, if deemed expedient and if it be found that they conform to the existing Constitution.

Mr. Foulke, for the Special Investigating Committee appointed by the Executive Committee at its meeting of November 16, 1893, to report on the condition of the Civil Service under the present Administration, read an exhaustive report of the result of the committee's work, reviewing the conduct of the Administration with reference to support of the Law and extension of the system, and stating the facts regarding such abuses as had been found to exist. That part of the report of the committee relating to the Treasury Department was read by Mr. Bonaparte.

Mr. Welsh reported the creditable administration of the rules in the Indian school service, to which reference had not been made in the report of the committee, and suggested the insertion of a paragraph touching upon the subject. Mr. Foulke accepted the suggestion for the committee, and, on motion of Mr. Dana, Messrs. Foulke, Bonaparte and Welsh were appointed a committee to prepare a paragraph such as had been proposed.

Mr. Low, for a committee appointed at the meeting of the General Committee to prepare a suitable testimonial of the appreciation by the League of the faithful service of the retiring Secretary, Mr. Potts, submitted the following:

*Resolved*, That the National Civil Service Reform League, upon the retirement of its secretary, Mr. William Potts, wishes to put upon record its warm appreciation of his long continued, faithful and freely given devotion to its service and the cause which it has prosecuted, with his aid, through many past years;

And to express to him its hearty thanks for that which he has so generously and gratuitously given—a large part of his life and work;

And to assure him that he will be always remembered as one of the important contributors to the success which our cause has increasingly attained, and the brighter prospects now opening, which give strong assurance that in the near future the merit system will hold complete sway throughout the national service, and as one of the workers whose patient continuance in well doing should not be forgotten when our work is finally crowned with a complete and universal triumph.

We trust that Mr. Potts, in the capacity of a vice president of the League, will be associated with us in close and friendly relations, as in the past.

Mr. Estes moved that the resolution submitted be adopted as the sense of the League, and that it be spread upon the minutes, and that an engrossed copy be sent to Mr. Potts. The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. Bonaparte, for a committee appointed at the meeting of the General Committee to report in regard to the continued publication of *Good Government*, reported as follows:

*Resolved*, That the publication of *Good Government* be continued under the same management as at present, until January 1, 1896; and that the sum of one thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, be appropriated to make good any deficiency in its revenues during the last six months of the year 1895: Provided, that the present editor be willing to accept this appropriation as a substitute for the existing guarantee, which will expire on July 1 next.

*Resolved*, That the League recognizes the great value of *Good Government* to the cause of Civil Service Reform, and the faithful and efficient service rendered by its editor, and expresses the hope that its publication can be continued, and its field of usefulness extended under the same able management; and to this end the Publication Committee be instructed to prepare and submit to the Executive Committee a plan for the continuance of the paper during two years from January 1, 1896, and as part of such plan to secure for its editor, without increased expense to the League, such assistance in the discharge of his duties as may enable the paper, treating of such topics as it has hitherto discussed, to deal with all questions arising in connection with efforts to secure honest and efficient government in the United States and especially with the interesting problems of Municipal Reform; such plan when approved by the Executive Committee to be carried into effect by the Publication Committee, and reported at the next annual meeting of the League.

After some discussion the resolutions were adopted unanimously, with an amendment offered by Mr. Estes increasing the amount to be guaranteed by the League



to cover any deficit occurring during the six months ending January 1, 1896, to \$1,200.

Mr. Potts, for the committee appointed to organize and promote the Anti-Spoils League, read an interesting report of the progress made, and the work now under way and in contemplation.\*

On motion of Mr. Estes the Committee on the Anti-Spoils League was requested to endeavor to extend the membership of the League within the Civil Service.

Mr. Swift presented a report from the special Committee on Political Assessments, appointed at the annual meeting of 1892, and continued at the annual meeting of 1893, which he read. The report stated the facts in connection with several specific cases of infraction of the Law, in certain of which, after prosecution of the offenders, convictions had been obtained. It reviewed also the recent opinion of Attorney-General Olney, holding that the solicitation of political contributions by means of letters addressed to employees at their posts of duty in the various Government buildings, does not constitute a violation of the law, and stated the probable difficulty, under the circumstances, of obtaining a judicial construction of the statute on this point.

The Report argued in favor of the enactment by Congress of a Bill prohibiting and making punishable, all solicitations from federal office-holders of political assessments or contributions by any means or by any persons.

The draft of a Bill to accomplish this object was submitted with the Report.

The Report recommended the adoption of the following resolutions :

*Resolved*, That in the judgment of the National Civil Service Reform League, all soliciting of political contributions from federal officials or employees, should be forbidden by law.

*Resolved*, That the Executive Committee be requested to take such steps as it may deem judicious, to urge upon Congress the passage of a statute which shall make such solicitation a punishable offence.

*Resolved*, That the draft of the bill submitted by the Commit-

tee upon Political Assessments be, and the same hereby is, referred to the Executive Committee for its consideration.

On motion of Mr. Foulke the report was accepted and the accompanying resolutions were adopted unanimously.

Mr. Low announced that Mayor Schieren of Brooklyn had given him a message to the effect that he wished to reiterate what he had said in Philadelphia, when about taking office, namely, that without the merit system in force and the elimination of all considerations but those of merit in the appointment, promotion and retention of municipal employees, good city government is impossible. The announcement was received with hearty applause.

The Secretary reported verbally important features of the year's work in New York City and State, reviewing the results of the investigation by the State Senate into the administration of the State civil service system, and the radical improvements since effected. He stated also the appointment by the Committee of Seventy, in New York City, of a sub-committee on the Civil Service, charged with the investigation of the municipal system, and with suggesting to the incoming Mayor such improvements and extensions as may seem necessary. This committee will recommend the extension of the rules to every class of position to which they may apply, together with the adoption of the registration system for laborers; and there appears to be no reason to doubt that these recommendations will be adopted. The adoption by the people of the Constitutional amendment, embodying the principles of Civil Service Reform in the fundamental law of the State, had increased the probability of obtaining the legislation necessary to complete the work of reorganization, and to place the Civil Service system of New York on a practically perfected basis.

On motion of Mr. Bonaparte, the League adjourned to reconvene after luncheon.

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COMMERCE CLUB, December 13, 1894—1.30 P. M.

The President took the chair.

The report of the Committee on Resolutions was called

for, and Mr. Siddons, for the committee, read the resolutions prepared. On motion of Mr. Bonaparte they were re-read, and considered seriatim, and, after some amendment, were adopted in the following form :

1. The National Civil Service Reform League congratulates the country upon the valuable additions to the classified service made by the President in his orders of November 3 and December 12. It regards as especially significant and worthy of commendation the fact that such measures were not postponed, like important extensions of the merit system heretofore made, until after a Presidential election removing the party in power; and also that they were made immediately effective, thus preventing preliminary changes of officials for partisan reasons in the places to which they apply.

2. The League demands that these orders be strictly and faithfully executed by all officers charged with their enforcement, and that all subterfuges designed to impair their effect and rob the public service and the country of their benefits be resolutely exposed, frustrated and punished; and especially that all Cabinet and other superior officers refuse their sanction to removals or appointments made in evasion of their terms.

3. The League calls attention to the excellent results of the merit system, where the law is faithfully enforced by efficient Commissioners and executive officers, as in the federal classified service, and in that of the State of Massachusetts, and it asks the people to contrast these results with the demoralization prevailing where the law has been evaded and nullified, as in the City and State of New York.

4. The League commends to the attention of its fellow citizens the admirable report of Postmaster-General Bissell on the Reform of the Civil Service in his Department, and congratulates the country on the adoption of regulations discouraging partisan activity on the part of postmasters and forbidding the removal of letter-carriers except on written charges, with full notice and an opportunity to make defence.

5. We call upon the present Congress to carry out the recommendations of the report of the Postmaster-General, and to pass the bill now pending for taking fourth-class postmasterships out of politics and providing for the systematic, businesslike method of appointment to this important branch of the public service.

6. The League commends the adherence to Reform methods in the Departments of the Navy and of Agriculture, and in the management of the Indian schools. It condemns the partisan reconstruction of the consular service and the many unjustifiable changes in the Treasury and the Interior Departments made for political reasons.

7. The League recommends the promulgation of a rule by the

executive authority requiring that employees be acquainted with charges that may be preferred against them before they shall be dismissed from office.

8. The League asks that a rule be adopted requiring that specific reasons be filed with the Civil Service Commission, for the failure to appoint the person whose name stands highest on any certified list; that power be given to the Commission to compel the attendance of witnesses, and to put them upon oath or affirmation, as is allowed by law in the case of the Interstate Commerce Commission; and that a system of registration for all laborers be established by law.

9. The Attorney-General having decided that soliciting by letter in a Government office contributions for political purposes from federal employees, is not a violation of the Civil Service Law, the League, while dissenting from this interpretation of the Law, which, in a great measure defeats its purpose, demands an amendment thereto expressly prohibiting such solicitations under the penalties provided in the act.

10. The League recommends that the office of Inspector in the Indian service be included within the classified service, so that partisanship, which now seriously interferes with the performance of duties of incumbents of this office, be eliminated.

11. The League recommends that executive action be taken applying to the local government of the District of Columbia the principles of Civil Service Reform, and, if found necessary, that there be such legislation as will carry into effect this recommendation.

12. The League rejoices in the general recognition of the merit system as an essential part of all plans of municipal reform, and in the evidence of popular confidence, as shown in the adoption by the people of New York of a constitution requiring competitive tests for admission to the Civil Service of that State.

The attention of the meeting was called by Colonel Burt to the fact that the necessity for reform in the Consular service had not been made the subject of a special resolution. Mr. Richmond thereupon presented the draft of a resolution, prepared by him, providing for the appointment of a committee of five to coöperate with committees of the National Board of Trade and other cognate bodies, in urging upon Congress the passage of an act to place the Consular service under Civil Service Rules. He suggested that this resolution, with some modifications, might be incorporated in the report of the Committee on Resolutions, as the utterance of the League on the subject. Remarks on the subject were made by Mr. John C. Gano, representing the National Board of

Trade, and by Messrs. Siddons, Aiken, Bonaparte and others. Mr. Bonaparte then moved the adoption of Mr. Richmond's resolution, and its incorporation in the report of the Committee on Resolutions, in the following form :

The League earnestly recommends the immediate application of the principles of Civil Service Reform to the Consular service of the United States, and that to this end a special committee of five be appointed to coöperate with similar committees of the National Board of Trade, and other commercial bodies, in urging upon Congress the passage of an act intended to give effect to this recommendation; and that such committee be directed to bring to the attention of our affiliated societies and of the commercial bodies of the country, the necessity for prompt action in this regard.

The motion was adopted unanimously, and the President appointed as members of the committee called for, Messrs. Henry A. Richmond of Buffalo, Oscar S. Straus of New York, William T. Baker of Chicago, Francis B. Reeves of Philadelphia, and Jonathan A. Lane of Boston.

The League then adjourned to reconvene after the public session, at 4 30 o'clock.

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An open meeting of the League was held at 2.30 o'clock. Messrs. J. C. Alton and C. M. O'Brien, representing the National Association of Letter Carriers, addressed the meeting with regard to the bill now pending in Congress providing that no postoffice clerk, railway mail clerk or letter carrier shall be removed until the reasons for such removal have been filed with the Postmaster-General, and the accused employee given an opportunity to appear in his own defence. Mr. Alton explained that the design of this bill is to secure permanently the privileges conferred by the recent order of Postmaster-General Bissell, and asked that the League endorse the measure and aid in securing its enactment.

Mr. Henry Culmbacher, representing the Postoffice Clerks' Association, asked that the endorsement of the League be given also to the pending bill providing for the classification of clerks on a basis similar to that of

the present classification of carriers. Action on both matters was deferred until the continuance of the business session.

Mr. W. G. Low read a paper prepared by Hon. Oscar S. Straus of New York on "The Reform of the Consular Service."\* Other papers were read by Hon. William Dudley Foulke on "The Theory and Practice of Civil Service Reform," and by Mr. Richard Henry Dana on "The Importance of Civil Service Reform Relatively to Other Reforms," and an address was delivered by President Charles Kendall Adams of the University of Wisconsin.

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The business session of the League was resumed at 4.30 o'clock, the President in the Chair.

Mr. Siddons presented the following preamble and resolution :

**WHEREAS**, Grave charges have been made involving violations of the Civil Service Law, and of Section 1781 of the Revised Statutes of the United States, against Charles H. J. Taylor, Recorder of Deeds of the District of Columbia; and

**WHEREAS**, Said charges have been investigated by the United States Civil Service Commission, which four months ago submitted to the President a report of the results of said investigation; and

**WHEREAS**, We recognize the necessity of promptly and vigorously meting out punishment to persons who violate the provisions of the Civil Service Law, and, also, of relieving from odium those who are unjustly charged with such violations; Therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the National Civil Service Reform League respectfully asks that the President, as soon as the exigencies of public business may permit, examine the charges aforesaid, and act thereon as his judgment shall dictate that justice and the public interest require; and that the President of the League take such steps as may be necessary and proper to call his attention to this subject.

After a short discussion, the resolution was adopted unanimously.

It being moved that the League pass to the consideration of the matters submitted by the representatives of

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the Letter Carriers' and Clerks' Associations respectively, the Secretary read the draft of a resolution of endorsement of the bills advocated by the organizations in question, prepared by Mr. Alton.

Mr. Bonaparte moved the adoption of the following, as a substitute for the resolution read :

*Resolved*, That the National Civil Service Reform League directs its Executive Committee to take such suitable measures as they may deem expedient, to secure as soon as possible the passage of the two bills advocated by the Letter Carriers' and Postoffice Clerks' Associations respectively, and for which these Associations ask its endorsement: Provided, that the details of these bills, upon careful consideration, commend themselves to the best judgment of the Executive Committee.

After some discussion, in which Messrs. Wood, Bonaparte, Dana, Burt, Richmond and the President participated, the resolution was adopted unanimously.

Mr. Estes for the special committee appointed at the last annual meeting to consider plans for the erection of a national memorial to the late President of the League, George William Curtis, reported the efforts toward this end already made and in contemplation. He reported also the suggestion submitted to the League by the Unity Club of Colorado Springs, that there be introduced in the public schools of the United States, if possible, what shall be known as a "Curtis Day," to be in some degree commemorative of the life of Mr. Curtis, and to be devoted by the pupils to the consideration of the general subject of administrative reform.

At Mr. Estes' request this suggestion, together with the further consideration of plans for the memorial to Mr. Curtis, was referred to the Executive Committee, and the special committee discharged.

Mr. Foulke read a statement of the successful administration of the Civil Service Rules in the Indian service, prepared by the special committee appointed for the purpose, and moved that it be incorporated in the report of the Investigating Committee. The motion was carried, and the report of the Investigating Committee as amended was, on motion, adopted.

Mr. Welsh moved that a committee of three be appointed by the Chair to consider ways and means of interesting labor organizations in the extension of Civil Service Reform, and of securing their active support. The motion was carried unanimously, and the President appointed as such committee Messrs. Welsh, Richmond and MacVeagh.

Mr. Dana, for the Committee on Selection of First, Second and Third Class Postmasters, reported that the draft of a bill had been printed and circulated among members of the League, and that the committee expects to be prepared to report more fully at an early date. The committee was continued.

Mr. Dana then offered the following minute, which, on motion, was adopted unanimously :

The National Civil Service Reform League is gratified to know that in Chicago, where it is assembled for its annual meeting, a special commission has been appointed which is now arranging for a system of strict competitive examinations under Civil Service Reform principles for appointments to the police force of that city.

On motion of General Aiken, it was voted unanimously that the thanks of the League be extended to the officers and members of the Chicago League for their courteous and generous hospitality.

On motion the meeting then adjourned.

*Attest:*

GEORGE MCANENY,  
*Secretary.*

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On the evening of the 13th a dinner was tendered by the Chicago League to the visiting delegates at the Grand Pacific Hotel. Interesting addresses were made by the chairman, Mr. John W. Ela, and by Messrs. Carl Schurz, William Dudley Foulke, John H. Hamline, Richard Henry Dana, Henry Wade Rogers, Herbert Welsh and Charles B. Wheeler.



## REPORT OF THE TREASURER.

CHICAGO, ILL., December 12, 1894.

*To the National Civil Service Reform League.*

GENTLEMEN :

I beg leave to make the following report as Treasurer for the period between May 5, 1893, when I assumed the duties of the office, to the 8th instant, when my books were closed.

*First. The General Fund.* I received from Mr. Potts, my predecessor, on May 5, 1893, the sum of \$990.79, being the balance to the credit of this fund then in his hands. There have been received by me since that date aggregate sums as follows :

From associations .....	\$211.60
“ contributions .....	532.00
“ other sources .....	99.91

\$843.51

which, with the balance received, gives a total of \$1,834.30. There has been expended during the same period the sum of \$1,284.28, leaving a balance now on hand of \$550.02.

*Second. The Secretary's Compensation Fund.*

Contributions .....	\$1,025.00
Paid on Salary Acc't .....	499.99

Balance now on hand ..... \$525.01

*Third. Good Government Guaranty Fund.* I received from the late Treasurer \$1,325.46, being balance in his hands to credit of this fund. I have since received \$3,315.31, making a total of \$4,640.77. The following payments have been made :

Repayment of loans .....	\$1,153.00
To Good Government .....	3,430.81

Total ..... \$4,583.81

leaving in my hands a balance of \$56.96.

*Fourth. Anti-Spoils League Fund.* I have received from contributions to this fund the sum of \$1,032.00, and have disbursed on its account the sum of \$999.20, leaving a balance of \$32.80.

The several balances are as follows :

General Fund .....	\$550.02
Sec'y Comp. Fund .....	525.01
Good Government Guaranty Fund .....	56.96
Anti-Spoils League Fund .....	32.80

Total ..... \$1,164.79

Respectfully submitted, with the accompanying accounts in detail, and vouchers therefor.

SILAS W. BURT,  
*Treasurer.*

## **ADDRESS OF MR. JOHN W. ELA,**

**PRESIDENT OF THE CHICAGO CIVIL SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE.**

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While Chicago enjoyed the unusual distinction the past year of welcoming to its civic hospitality the representatives of nearly every department of intellectual activity, throughout the civilized world, I feel entirely safe in saying that there has never been an instance where that hospitality has been extended with so much promise of practical benefit to the citizens of our city as to-day, on the occasion of the first meeting in the West of the National Civil Service Reform League. While you will find here many men who have been earnest advocates of Civil Service Reform all through the history of that movement, and a local league with a membership of five to six hundred, composed of members of all political parties, still you will discover abundant reasons for emphasizing the missionary feature of your visit. You will have to employ a negative process of reasoning to account for Chicago's attitude toward Civil Service Reform. It is the result of experience, where it is not, rather than knowledge of what it is.

The atmosphere in this city, however, has recently been growing very salubrious to the growth of this particular plant. A bill was prepared by the Chicago League and introduced at the last session of our Legislature (winter of 1892-93) establishing the merit system. This bill, when introduced, covered the official positions in the State and all the cities thereof. The country members objected to its application to the State offices, as it was claimed that the men who filled those offices came largely from country districts, where every man

knew his neighbor, and therefore there was no need of a competitive examination to ascertain his merits. And so, at their demand, State offices came out of the bill. Then representatives of some of the cities antagonized the bill. A *referendum* was attached and the bill was made to apply to those cities only which should adopt it at some general election. Then some of the smaller departments of the city had to come out—our object being, finally, to get some kind of a law as an opening which should at least cover the principal departments of our city government, and in that shape the bill was recommended for passage by the Election Committee in the Senate, and was passed to a third reading. It stopped there, late in the session, on account of supposed necessities for legislation in other directions. But the members of the Legislature were made familiar with the theory of the Reform and its successful operation in other States, and a considerable impetus was developed, which found expression later.

The people are always in advance of their supposed leaders in this regard. In this city they are formulating the demand for the Reform at every opportunity, and in terms which are constantly growing more definite and imperative. At each local election for the last few years, citizens' tickets, generally fostered by the Chicago League, based distinctively on Civil Service Reform—the "Merit System" of appointments to office—have gained the support of many of our best citizens of all political parties; and the ratio of the increase of the Civil Service Reform element has been so extraordinary, including, recently, nearly every newspaper in the city, that it is now practically conceded that no ticket can succeed in the next municipal election in this city which is not based upon the application of that system to our city government. Politicians, of all parties, are canvassing the policy of allowing some kind of a Civil Service Reform bill to pass the next Legislature, rather than wait for the next popular demonstration which threatens to relieve these anxious gentlemen of all responsibility in the matter.

One of the most important of the more recent influences in the creation of this favorable public sentiment is the Chicago Civic Federation. This is a non-partisan organization which is gradually absorbing into its active agencies that portion of our population commonly known as the "best citizens," regardless of their politics, and whose one object—so simple in expression, so complex in its practical realization—is civic reform. This organization has only been in existence a little more than a year, and has already, in addition to its Central Council, ward councils in twenty of the principal wards of the city, with new councils being formed every few weeks. It has, in the one year of its existence, made effective and successful attacks on several long-standing municipal abuses. Its various committees—such as those on taxation, industrial, moral and educational reform, etc.—are composed of people carefully selected for their special knowledge on the respective subjects, and they are busily at work preparing legislation, or other remedial methods, which are to be supported by the aggregated weight of this great civic force. Their Civil Service Reform Committee is coöperating with our Civil Service Reform League. But the Civil Service Reform idea—the application of the merit system—is the essential element in nearly the entire work of the Federation. Without it, in most of the lines in which they are operating, there could be no permanent success. They are, therefore, our natural and willing allies.

Within the last month the Mayor of this city appointed a commission to coöperate with him in a plan, to be put into immediate execution, and without waiting for legislation, which shall put the police force of the city upon a Civil Service Reform basis, and to draft a bill to be presented to our next Legislature, which shall make such reform in the police department permanent. The Commission having investigated the experience of these municipalities under such laws, yesterday reported a plan which puts our police department upon a Civil Service Reform basis, and provides for the filling of all

vacancies hereafter under the merit system, after competitive examination. While the plan reported follows largely the law and rules of Massachusetts as to appointments to office, it goes further than any of the present Civil Service Reform laws or rules in that it provides for the reorganization of the present police force upon the merit principle. It compels all members of the present force who have served less than ten years (comprising eighty-five per cent of the present force) to submit to the same examination as new applicants, allowing them, however, a credit under the head of "experience," proportioned to the number of years they have been in the service, thus practically reorganizing the force on the merit principle.

The plan also abolishes the former "Trial Board"—composed of the police inspectors—and substitutes a trial board of three citizens, not more than two of whom shall belong to one political party, and who shall not be in any way connected with the police department, and provides that all charges shall be tried by this board.

The Mayor has accepted the plan of the Commission, and the Mayor and Superintendent of Police have given orders that it be enforced. The Commission is retained and it is to see to the enforcement of the rules; and the Commission has prepared the examinations, the questions, and is ready to put the plan into operation.

The Commission has also drafted a bill applying this reform in the police department to all cities in this State having a population of 20,000 or over. The principle of the bill has been approved by the Chiefs of Police of the cities of Illinois at their convention lately held at Aurora; and it is hoped that in the present state of public opinion, and with the system in successful operation in Chicago, this bill will become a law. This Commission is greatly indebted to Hon. R. H. Dana and to the Massachusetts Civil Service Commissioners for very valuable assistance.

In addition to this, another bill, applying this reform to all the departments in the city government, and to

apply to all cities in the State which shall vote to adopt it, is being prepared by the Chicago Civil Service Reform League, in conjunction with the Committee of the Civic Federation, and will be urged for passage in the Legislature, and we expect it to become a law.

Gentlemen, it is peculiarly gratifying to us of the Chicago League that you have come to our city this year for your annual meeting. We believe we can promise you a sympathetic and intelligent appreciation. We have watched the progress of the movement, of which you have been the sponsors and the promoters, with admiration and satisfaction. We have seen it develop from a sentiment, undefined and timidly acknowledged, taking form, imperceptibly, in the midst of almost universal derision and against savage opposition, until it has become specialized in a symmetrical body of practical rules, for the application of a business principle in the conduct of public affairs and approved by the best public sentiment; and has practically crystallized into laws, which have successfully withstood tests of the severest and most hostile character.

But while the demonstration of the correctness and adaptability of the principle has been so palpably successful, still the Reform is only at the threshold of its usefulness, and of the domain which it ought to occupy; and which—through the grace of God and the unflagging efforts of the Civil Service Reform Leagues—it will occupy, before the sun goes down on the last day of this century.

The system is simply the specific application to public corporations of a business principle upon which every successful private business enterprise has been carried on for centuries, and should be applied to every appointive position in the public service, whether federal, State or city, which is not distinctively of a political character. Very few States have as yet any law at all on the subject, and in those States where there is a law, and under the present federal law, a large proportion of the offices are still not covered. The magnitude of the work yet to be done is, therefore, almost appallingly

apparent. Notwithstanding the obvious utility and necessity of the adoption of this system, and the encouraging foothold it has already obtained, the opposition is, in many quarters, as bitter and as seemingly powerful as ever. There is no bond of common plunder to bind together men who are fighting simply for the general good. There is not even the reward of public position, for—at least, until recently—it is the method by which public office is usually obtained that the Civil Service Reformers are fighting against. While, on the other hand, the opposition is composed wholly of the politician, who alone reaps the profits of the old methods, led by the *professional politicians*, whose political death will exactly coincide with the demise of the spoils system.

We know the sacrifices you have made in identifying yourselves with this work. We know that the active members of your association are men whose attainments would have procured them distinguished positions in public life, if they had desired them, and had been willing to maintain the conventional silence as to the prostitution of the public service. We know what it has cost you, as busy men of affairs, and in an atmosphere heavy with discouragement, to constantly carry the burden of this great Reform, in the result of which you have no more staked than has the humblest taxpayer in the land. We remember the unfaltering devotion, the brilliant courage, the commanding talents of your late president—George William Curtis—the distinguished scholar, the American statesman without an office, the leader of a bloodless revolution, which, however modest and commonplace and unheroic in its nearer aspect, will have an incalculable significance in its bearing on the future welfare of our country.

Gentlemen, we thank you for what you have done, and we promise you our cordial coöperation in what you have to do.

# THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPOILS IDEA UPON THE GOVERNMENT OF AMERICAN CITIES.

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BY HERBERT WELSH.

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It is a good thing when a man's mind becomes sufficiently acute and his moral instincts sufficiently true to forewarn him of a dangerous tendency in his personal life and of its coming disastrous result. This power is the measure of the man's moral dignity and attainment. The essential distinction between the man who may be called "educated," in things ethical and intellectual, and one who is not so, would seem to lie mainly in this power to apprehend the nature of a bad theoretical drift before it has irrevocably put on the flesh of an accomplished evil outcome. Now may not precisely the same ability to correct evil tendencies before they bring their catastrophe be the measure of a nation's moral dignity—the index of its ethical advancement? Certainly in our collective public and national life the effect of a sound education ought to be just what it is in our individual private life, to render us sensitive to bad popular tendencies, bad ideas which are steadily turning the current of public affairs toward the crags of serious trouble, possibly disaster; and let us begin by recognizing that in this country of ours each individual man shares with every other man responsibility for a national evil tendency. In America to-day education should at least endue every man with enough of the prophetic gift to enable him to read the signs of his own times; he should be able to make up what mind he has, with what force he has, as to what is the battle of his day most worth fighting, what the public danger which most demands his little share of attention and sacrifice. The prophets, with us, of fifty years ago thought they saw in



slavery the question of questions for this country, and with varying degrees of wisdom and unwisdom they argued that question to its settlement.

If it is true that American public life to-day presents a picture at once ludicrous and menacing, a fierce struggle for spoils, in which men remind us irresistibly of the most rapacious of the carnivorous animals—the tiger, the wolf, the shark—we may be sure that these dangerous tendencies have grown unduly strong in our private and individual life. The spoils idea, which is simply the tiger idea translated into politics, can never lie down in peace with the American idea—which is that of free institutions founded on principles of justice toward all men, respect for all men—the maintenance of public rights and public interests as against the open attacks of an insane anarchy on the one hand, or the far more dangerous, insidious and truly anarchic attacks of unscrupulous greed on the other. If we see clearly that the spoils idea has organized and intrenched itself dangerously in our American public life—that in it is found an enemy whose presence cannot be ignored—then it is both our duty and to our interest to devise the best practical means with which to oppose and overcome it. We must convince the great body of our good citizens who are thoroughly loyal to American institutions and who are willing to give their share of labor in sustaining them, first, that the situation is in reality a dangerous one; and, second, we must make clear to them what are the main lines of effort along which we must move to obtain relief. First, the situation is dangerous and the conditions in which its danger lies are general. The spoils idea, with its innumerable corrupting influences, has taken deep root in the soil of American politics. In American political life it has become a habit of thought. It early appeared with us after the founding of the Republic, struggling at first bravely for its existence; then under the Jacksonian Administration it leaped into luxuriant life and has since become dominant, although this may be called the era of reform in which the spoils idea is steadily declining in public

respect and the reform idea is ever winning fresh victories. But the especial home and nursery of the spoils idea to-day is the American city—not New York or Chicago, or Philadelphia or Baltimore alone—but the cities generally of the United States, and the material organism of that idea is the political machine, with its coterie of Boss leaders and its army of henchmen followers. To illustrate the pervasion and dominance of the spoils idea in the cities of the country: When the National Conference for Good City Government, which was held at Philadelphia last winter, announced the intention of forming a National League for the Promotion of Good Government in American Cities, the response was prompt and general. Immediately letters began to come in from cities and towns all over the United States ranging from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Gulf to the Canadian line—letters from earnest men and women engaged in the same struggle as ourselves, revealing the same general conditions of bad local government as we contended with at home. Everywhere the boss and the machine are boring deep and disastrously into the fibre of the municipality. The same question was propounded by all our correspondents: “What is the quickest and most effective way to destroy these parasites and to obtain municipal government which is honest, wise and in the interest of the public?” The answer of the Civil Service Reformer and that of the worker for Good City Government are the same: “Destroy the spoils idea in American politics, and teach our people that American institutions will not run themselves.” This may not be a brilliant or original response, but it contains the most important truth that we have to act upon. Our function is to get a wider and more influential hearing for simple principles and practical methods which have long been accepted and acted upon by the handful of scattered reformers. We must state those facts which have driven us to work, with such force and reiteration that the great mass of now unthinking and uncaring good men will heed and hear. It should be our great object to join closely the kindred

causes of Civil Service Reform and Municipal Reform. They are wings of the same army, and they should march and fight in a single plan of campaign under the same general leadership. Our force in the field will be greatly increased and its morale strengthened if we adopt this plan. Popular interest in the cause of Civil Service Reform is likely to be quickened by vivid illustration of the injury which the spoils system inflicts upon the government of our great cities. At once our efforts should be directed toward carrying on a much more vigorous propaganda for recruiting our forces by appeals to public sentiment based on the actual facts of the case. Nothing interests people so much as a statement of facts susceptible of proof, which illustrate a theory and prove the truth of our contention. Skillful reiteration of the same truth is a large part of the battle, for, in bringing public attention to the point of action, it is not so much the *new thing as the true thing* that needs to be said—and said in a way that will touch not the few only but the mass of men. Patience is as much needed as more brilliant qualities in the slow work of producing public sentiment through that long series of preliminary oscillations until it starts voluntarily upon its strong resistless course.

Any of our great cities will furnish an “embarras de richesse” in illustrations of the influence which the spoils idea is exerting upon American municipal government, but certainly few are richer in this regard than my own city (Philadelphia), and I naturally select it as my arsenal of facts.

A study of the political conditions of Philadelphia and of the State of Pennsylvania will show the debasement of political life and varied loss to the community which the spoils idea brings, and how the intrenchment of the spoils system in a great city not only casts a blight upon municipal life, but creates a compact political machine which controls both State and national politics also. The Philadelphia machine concerns itself not only with local affairs, but it determines who shall represent us in the State Legislature and in the United

States Senate. The few men who direct autocratically the movements of the machine are without standing or reputation in the community. The acknowledged leader of the machine, Mr. Quay, is not a resident of Philadelphia, but that does not hinder him from taking a constant and minute interest in all our affairs. His visits to the city are frequent, and are the signal for the gathering of the machine leaders to consult with him and to get their orders. A leading journal of Philadelphia recently announced the name of a well-known aspirant for the Mayoralty of the city as the one whom Mr. Quay preferred; and an indication of his preference in such matters is usually equivalent to a nomination. Mr. Quay is the recognized political boss of the State, and also has for many years represented Pennsylvania in the United States Senate. In that body he has been conspicuously neglectful of public duty, his seat in the Senate being vacant for days and weeks—even months—at a time, while the newspapers obsequiously recorded his successes in tarpon fishing on the Florida coast. His political vagaries and heresies as judged from the orthodox party point of view, have been notorious; the allegations of his speculations with \$260,000 of State funds, the truth of which the moral proofs are so strong as to have fully convinced the general public—all these accumulated indictments have abated no whit of his political power as a city, State or national boss. Why should they under a political régime in which the idea of spoils—obtained by force or fraud—is the ruling idea? Mr. Quay and those who form his staff as lieutenants, or serve as his henchmen, represent logically and truly a political idea which the citizens of Philadelphia, taken as a body, have not only tolerated by indifference, but have again and again approved by their votes. No fair-minded man acquainted with the conditions of municipal life in Philadelphia will deny that a majority of the members of the City Council are purchasable men, and that their votes on questions affecting the most vital public interests and public funds are controlled by corrupt means. Instance after instance might be cited

where wealthy corporations acting in conjunction with the municipal machine, have, as it is generally believed, obtained, corruptly, privileges and concessions from the city of immense value, while giving no adequate return. But all this business, although disastrous both to public and private morals, and to the municipal pocket, is the logical and natural fruit of the spoils idea. If it is right to give out offices which are intended simply for the impartial service of the public as a reward for even the most unscrupulous kinds of political work, why is it wrong for a man to use public legislation for his private interests? Both are the outgrowth of the spoils idea. The dishonest theory begets the dishonest act. A few years ago we had a city treasurer who seeing that some splendid fortunes had been made in Philadelphia by a judicious use of public moneys, endeavored to improve his chances in the same way, but his speculations were unfortunate, and a great public scandal, with a loss to the city of more than one million dollars, and a personal loss of fifteen years' liberty to him, were the results. But what is the essential difference between borrowing the public moneys for the prosecution of private business, and paying party and personal debts by the gift of office, the salary of which is drawn from the public treasury? There may be a difference in degree, but there is no difference in kind; and the acts which have so startled the community and ruined their perpetrators have doubtless been committed, under the influence of a prevailing vicious theory, with comparatively innocent intention on the part of the wrongdoers.

Last year the Attorney-General of Pennsylvania recovered by process of law \$60,000 for the Commonwealth from six prominent daily newspapers of Philadelphia. This money the court decided had been obtained unlawfully and corruptly, and the decision was reaffirmed by the Supreme Court. It was a case where an agent of the City Treasurer's office had visited the newspapers in question and had offered to give them a share of certain public advertising if they would pay him a rebate of

forty per cent. This they agreed to do, and in order to secure sufficient profits they charged the State forty per cent more than they would have done an ordinary advertiser. That such a conspiracy to defraud the State could have been entered into and carried out successfully between a public officer and six leading newspapers of a great American city shows how far the spoils idea in the treatment of public office and of public funds has been carried, and how it has blunted men's moral sense. But what sincere and thorough advocacy of reform in municipal politics, and of the abolition of the spoils system, with all its corruptions, can be expected from a public press which has been guilty of the very practices which it is its peculiar function to expose and denounce?

The influence which the spoils idea has exerted upon city politics in Philadelphia is further illustrated by the prevailing custom under which the bosses assess the city employees, nominally for election expenses. Under our new ballot law legitimate and necessary election expenses are paid by the State, so that no excuse longer exists for the machine to practice this species of blackmail. Political assessments recently made in Philadelphia have been regular and heavy. Probably \$25,000 or \$30,000 is raised in this way at a single election, yet the public sentiment has not been sufficiently aroused to demand the publication of statements from political committees of the expenditure of this money. There is good reason to believe that it is used partly to promote fraudulent practices at elections, to pay repeaters, to buy negro and white voters, etc. It is also probable that it not infrequently clings to the pockets of the men who collect it. Last autumn a city assessor, known to the writer as a gentleman of intelligence and character, was obliged to pay \$30 as his personal assessment for political expenses. At the same time a lady serving on one of the city's local school boards was assessed by the ward boss and chairman of the ward campaign committee \$25 for the same purpose. She demurred at first, but finally paid the money under the

advice of her associates on the school board. The local boss who imposed the assessment argued that since she had received her office as the gift of the Republican party, it was only just that she should help meet the party campaign expenses. From the spoils and partisan standpoint this is fair reasoning. The spoils and party idea has been carried to its extreme length. Instead of the public good, the party good is the ostensible object to be aimed at, while in reality even legitimate party interests have been sacrificed to those of a corrupt, mercenary and merciless machine.

The spoils idea has made itself seriously felt in the public education of the city, for under the dual system by which our public schools are managed, authority is vested both in a central Board of Education, whose members are appointed by the judges of the Court of Common Pleas, and in a multiplicity of local school boards, one for each of our thirty-seven wards. Members to the local boards are elected by the people, consequently they have become part of the political municipal system. They are the kindergartens of machine politics, where the first and simplest lessons in spoils ideas may be thoroughly learned. Good men are found serving in them, but they do so at a disadvantage, and any independent action looking solely toward the welfare of the schools will lead either to their discipline—"punishment," I believe, is the technical word in the vocabulary of the petty politician—or their expulsion from the board. In my own ward two of the best men serving on the local school board failed to be renominated on the party ticket through orders of the machine, solely because they served the schools and the public too well; while a third was "punished" by degradation from the chairmanship of an important committee because—although himself a strong Republican—he dared to vote for a Democrat of high position and intelligence to fill a vacant place upon the board.

Through every department of municipal life in Philadelphia the evils of the spoils system and of machine government are apparent. It is urged by those who

admit these evils but assert the sacredness of party obligation as an excuse for voting with the machine, that in attendance upon the party primaries is to be found the remedy. I have known of many cases where this plan has been repeatedly and sincerely tried, but never with success. An attempt was made last winter in the Twenty-second ward of Philadelphia by a number of gentlemen to defeat the machine at the primaries. I personally assisted in the attempt and had an opportunity to see how the machine manages a primary. The primary was held at night, and it was only through the exertions of the Reform faction, so I was informed, that lights were used. It was the intention of the regulars to have held the meeting in darkness. The affair was controlled entirely by the local boss and a member of the State Legislature, who employed the most outrageous browbeating and unlawful means to carry the election in favor of their candidates, which, it is hardly necessary to add, they succeeded in doing. The vote of a friend and neighbor of the writer was thrown out, although there was no question whatever of his eligibility as a Republican voter; while on the side of the machine it is alleged that a number of men who did not even live in the ward, or who were otherwise disqualified, cast their votes. The machine politician will, in the long run, always win at primary elections as they are now constituted, for he can and will employ tricks and devices for attaining his object which are not open to the honest voter.

But, perhaps, the saddest and most discouraging indication of the influence which the spoils idea has exerted upon municipal government, as illustrated by the experience of Philadelphia, is found in the attitude of our young men of position and education who enter public life. The machine welcomes such young men when they stoop to its code and accept its invariable requirement: the surrender of independence and the adoption of unscrupulous methods. When one sees the college graduate, the man whose education, position and surroundings would lead the world to expect of him the highest principles and most scrupulous conduct in pub-



lic life, accept both personal companionship and political morals at the hands of men whose path to power has been through the slough of ward violence and election frauds, he begins to see how the so-called better classes in the community are reaping the reward of their selfish indifference to the corruptions of politics. They were too pure and too fine to perform their bounden duty to the State, and now the very evil which they affected to shun by disregard of duty has crept into their own households.

The influence of the spoils idea upon municipal government in Philadelphia, and upon politics in Pennsylvania simply illustrates its influence everywhere throughout the country. We are not sinners above all others, bad though our condition is. If in American politics public office is to be degraded from the position of a sacred trust which an alert and exacting public sentiment should ever guard, to that of a prize open to the strongest and the least scrupulous, just such a dangerous state of affairs as I have sketched in Philadelphia, and which is general throughout the country, must continue. Are we alarmists or doctrinaires when we say that such a condition needs the promptest and the most radical treatment, and that no means will be found sufficiently drastic to the cure of the disease but an earnest conviction on the part of American citizens that each man owes to the State a debt of public duty and that the spoils must be rooted out?

There are instances of application where the spoils idea seems comparatively harmless. It is this very appearance of innocence which has made it so dangerous. But once admit it as a principle in political practice and it will ultimately destroy all honorable and healthful political life. The remedy is not far to seek. The question of good city government and of Civil Service Reform have both gained a hearing which will become more respectful and attentive as time goes on. Both questions are to-day receiving a consideration from the public which is full of encouragement for the future. Both the secular and religious press of the country is

giving large space to a serious, practical discussion of the subject. The revelations of the incredible corruptions in New York City government, with the aroused and organized public sentiment that is working for Tammany's overthrow\* and the splendid results which the intelligent, non-partisan and wholly honest administration of Mayor Schieren are bringing to Brooklyn are drawing the eyes of the country and convincing increasing numbers of men that the questions of Civil Service Reform and good city government are not the fads of amateur politicians, but are questions of fundamental national importance.

The equipment of the National Civil Service Reform League, which under the able and devoted leadership of our former President, Mr. George William Curtis, has given such gallant battle to the spoils idea in the United States, and has stood for so many years as the champion of the Reform, should be perfected. It ought at once to be furnished abundant financial means by generous men to do a work from which heretofore its straitened finances have held it back. What memorial to Mr. Curtis could be more appropriate, more practical, more in the line of his own desires than that the cause to which he gave the wealth of his rich gifts should be made at once a triumphant cause. It can be made so if sufficient funds are supplied to perfect its organization, to enable it to reach, through printed and spoken word, the ear and mind of the country. Side by side with the strengthened movement for Civil Service Reform must go the organized efforts of our good men and women for rooting out of our great cities the spoils idea, and for establishing in all its varied departments good municipal government. To stimulate and guide such a dual movement which must end in revolutionizing the entire thought of the country, will of course require large sacrifice upon the part of those who think the effort worth while. But if the redemption and perpetuation of American institutions is to be brought about, certainly it is worth the while.

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\* This article was written before the defeat of Tammany.

## **CITIZENSHIP AND THE CIVIL SERVICE.**

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**By HON. C. P. WALBRIDGE.**

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In former times movements for reform in government were for the purpose of securing to the people more control over affairs of state. These movements culminated in the Constitution of the United States, which guarantees to the people full and absolute control, and transfers the crown of sovereignty from the head of one to the heads of all; thus reversing the old theory that all power of government was vested in the executive head, who delegated to the people as much of it as he saw fit, and vesting this power in the people, who delegate as much as they see fit to individuals for execution. Hence, under our system, reform movements are for the purpose of securing faithful execution on the part of those persons who may have been chosen for that purpose. Under the old system the watchword of reform movements was "Liberty," under our system it is "Fidelity." Then, liberty of the people; now, fidelity of representatives.

This association seeks, not to extend our liberty, but to correct faults which human weakness has permitted to enter the exercise of our liberty, and to my mind this is of more consequence to the American people than any question of business policy that has been agitated since the Government was founded. True, our progress in the accumulation of wealth and the development of our natural resources depend much upon the wise adjustment of the tariff, a safe and sufficient system of currency and a careful regulation of commerce between

the States. True, our social and industrial progress depend much upon the wisdom and honesty applied to questions that arise between capital and labor, but the very life of the body politic depends upon an honest, patriotic administration of the forms of government planned by the forefathers under the direction of the united sentiment of all our people without distinction.

Doubtless the honor of addressing you has been conferred upon me because of my intimate connection with municipal affairs, and you will prefer that I should confine my remarks to that department. I assume that you do not expect me to discuss details, but express such views of city government in general as experience may suggest.

It seems to me that some popular errors have crept into the discussion of municipal management. It is an error to assume that all city government is bad and all city officials are constantly employed in devising methods of plundering the community and making the lives of its inhabitants intolerable. Doubtless the average city official is more honest and capable than he is given credit for. Most people are so constructed they would rather hear of a man's faults than his virtues. The alert public press, with an eye to business, is quick to discover that where the expression of a complimentary truth will sell ten papers, a well written criticism will sell a thousand. That newspaper men should take advantage of this weakness in human nature is only to be expected, and if some of them carry it to the very verge of truth they are no worse than many citizens who, with less incentive, carry the same principle into the gossip of our clubs and business houses and parlors and the streets, yes, even the pulpits of our great cities. Nevertheless there are many faithful public servants, who year after year, silently, honestly and efficiently give to their city all they have to give.

That grievous wrongs exist in municipal politics no one can doubt, but in estimating these wrongs and in considering methods to reduce them to a minimum, we must guard against that unpleasant human attribute

which causes many to roll scandal under the tongue as a sweet morsel and wearily tolerate virtue, or associate it with stupidity and lack of energy.

Another popular error is to compare European cities with American cities. At intervals our magazines teem with articles showing the excellence of municipal management in Europe, especially of German cities, and contrasting it with municipal life in this country. It seems to me that the comparison is of little value to us, for the reason that our electoral system is radically different and cannot be changed. English cities have a restricted franchise. France has so recently extended the franchise that the result cannot be estimated. In German cities the ballot is limited to taxpayers. The taxpayers are listed according to the amount of taxes they pay, the largest taxpayer heading the list. They are then divided into three classes, each class covering one-third the aggregate amount of taxes paid. Each class then elects an equal number of delegates to an electoral college which selects the city government. Under this system a voter of the first class has about twenty times the power of the voter of the third class. In one city of 80,000 inhabitants there are only three men in the first class and those three men constitute one-third the voting power of the city. Mayors are chosen for life and promoted from smaller to larger cities. How can we hope to obtain practical results by comparing conditions so radically different and that cannot possibly be made similar.

Again we are told that municipal government is like the management of a business corporation; that the mayor takes the place of business manager, councilmen are the directors and the people stockholders, etc. This idea is frequently advanced by candidates for city offices in the hope, I suppose, of winning the votes of business men. It is a taking theory and one likely to mislead.

In law the difference between the two is marked. A municipal corporation has no power not conferred upon it by charter. A business corporation has power to do

all things an individual can do, not prohibited by its charter or general laws.

The powers of a municipal corporation are simply delegated to it by the State and may be withdrawn at any time, in which event its property becomes the property of the State.

A business corporation has an inviolable contract with the State and its property cannot be taken without compensation.

The objects of a municipal corporation principally are to protect the rights of individuals as guaranteed by our scheme of government, and to apply the proceeds of taxation in such manner as to produce the greatest convenience to the largest number. The sole object of a business corporation is to make profit.

The one controls persons; the other, property.

The business manager has back of him stockholders whose sole instruction is to increase their property. They care not how it is done, so long as he keeps within the lines of commercial honor. A Mayor has back of him half a million, a million, possibly two million people to whom the State has delegated the power of self-government, the power to control each other, to punish, and, if necessary, imprison each other. These individuals differ in disposition, in tastes, in desires; they differ in personal strength, in intellectual development, in moral development; they differ in occupation and environment; they differ in religious training and hereditary influences; yet each stands before the law a unit of no more or less value than any other unit. The State in delegating its authority to the city, has plainly said, the man of great wealth is a unit, and the man of abject poverty is another unit, exactly equal in value. The State has said, the man of trained, cultured mind shall measure a unit, and the illiterate man measures the same. The State has said, that the refining, elevating influence of a devout religious life can make of a man nought but a unit, and the most incorrigible scoundrel in the community, so long as he escapes sentence, is likewise a unit.

The time is passed for discussing the wisdom of this theory. It is the genius of our plan of government. It is the breath of life to our Declaration of Independence, as well as the State and Federal Constitutions. It was the lodestone to the men of '76, whose wisdom and virtue have never yet been brought in question. The fallibility of individual human judgment makes it necessary for the State to act upon this theory, but there is a law superior to State law, superior to national law, which recognizes equality in human units, a law which says the fittest must survive. Our State law of equality in the units is in perfect harmony with this higher law of inequality because, in giving each unit an equal chance at all stages of the unit life, the State thereby gives the higher law full opportunity to make its own discriminations. Our institutions will reach the highest perfection only when each unit, to the full extent of its power, shall make upon them its individual impression, because only under such circumstances can the higher law make full discrimination between the fit and unfit. This community, thus constituted, selects its own units to enforce the community rules and regulations adopted for the control of their person as well as property.

Is it not true then that the management of municipal affairs is government—a part of the great system handed down to us by the fathers? And to approach it as a business proposition is to degrade it and strip it of the lofty sentiments which enabled the colonists to mark a new era in the advancement of mankind. To view it as a business question is to remove from the inhabitants of the city the responsibility of citizenship.

If I were asked for the shortest possible definition of municipal management I should say it is "Popular government in its acutest form." It is unlike State government only in intensity. As the duties of a man who deals in merchandise compare with the duties of a man who deals on the board of trade, so does State government compare with municipal government. The merchant sits at his desk and considers the purchase or sale of goods with deliberation. He computes the

profit with deliberation. He estimates the purchaser's financial strength with deliberation. The dealer on 'Change, surrounded and jostled by hundreds of eager, shrewd competitors, in an instant, when the call is made, passes upon all these questions by one intellectual bound. In State government, events succeed each other at such long intervals and are so similar in character as to give the slowest intellect time to master them in detail. In city government a countless variety of questions pile one upon another or succeed each other in such rapid succession as to demand immediate decision and accurate action. Does it not follow that municipal government, in all its details from the primary election to the executive chair, calls for men with trained and accurate minds, men having a knowledge of government, men with principles fixed and not experimental? Does it not call for men with breadth of mind sufficient to recognize the exact political equality of the community units? Does it not call for men with abiding faith in the higher law controlling our institutions and sympathy with the spirit which inspired their founding?

I have the honor to address men principally from cities, men who may be fairly said to possess the qualities I have described, who are in position to know. Then in all good faith permit me to ask: In your cities do such men serve in the capacity I have mentioned? Do they enter into consultation with the other units in their precinct for the purpose of securing delegates who will represent the true sentiment of their neighbors, not feeling it beneath their dignity to consult with the humblest unit that is stamped with the great seal of citizenship? Do they follow this up by going to the primaries and insisting that the result be honestly recorded? Do they go to conventions and use their power to secure the nomination of representative men? Do they counsel with the other men in their precincts to devise ways and means of preventing frauds on election day? Do they accept nominations for aldermen and mayor, etc.? Do they watch their public servants, and when they are



right sustain them amidst the storm of unjust criticism? Do they bring into the contest at every stage that trained intelligence, that unselfish patriotism, and knowledge of government, by which they are specially qualified to comprehend and handle these difficult questions in municipal affairs? Do they do these things persistently and continuously? You have anticipated my question, and before it was completed you recognized an exceedingly vulnerable spot in the position of many men who cry loudest against municipal misrule. Not that I advance this as a novel or original suggestion, for I know full well that every man within the sound of my voice recognizes and deplores this fault. Yet, if what I have said be true, that municipal government is but a department in the great political system of our common country, and the department in which the human family advances or recedes with greatest rapidity, I do not understand how a member of that department can feel that he has discharged his duty to his family, to his neighbor, to his God, without having devoted his talents, his time and his strength to secure the application of this principle in purity and in the spirit of its founders. I know the duty is not a pleasant one. I know its thorough performance forces contact with people whose habits are disagreeable from our standpoint, whose thoughts are not in harmony with ours, but it must be remembered that want of harmony with any given element of the community does not deprive a man of his citizenship; but I am not responsible for the manner in which he exercises his rights unless I permit him to do alone that which should be done by him and me jointly. It is not a pleasant thing to stand for office in a great city and bear the criticism of a hostile press and the more vicious slanders of secret opponents, to have your whole life laid bare and even the sanctity of your home invaded. Yet these great municipalities are the storm centres of advancing civilization and must have men in the thick of the fight whose strength and skill and virtue are equal to any test.

No machine is self-operating. Perpetual motion has

not as yet been discovered either in mechanics or politics. Forms of government are but machinery by means of which citizens must work out results. The most ideal system will work clumsily in the hands of clumsy men, viciously in the hands of vicious men. I believe there is not a city in America without sufficient machinery to enable the inhabitants to enforce their own will. I believe there is not a city in America without a very large majority of honest, capable, patriotic men. Believing this, I can but conclude that municipal misrule is almost wholly due to neglect by men who have mental and moral qualifications to correct the wrong. I know this is old-fashioned doctrine, and I am confident that many of my hearers are disappointed that my remarks do not contain a suggestion of some new plan for the correction of wrongs in the management of cities. Yet after eight years close connection with the government of a large city, after giving the subject such careful thought as its importance demands, I am unable to suggest any plan or machinery that will take the place of old-fashioned persistent, personal industry on the part of electors.

It is said that in some pagan countries there are praying machines. A man who is too busy or too lazy to engage in personal worship will set this machine in motion and it will grind out prayers while the owner is engaged in other work or indulgences. Ridiculous as this may seem, it is no more so than for an intelligent people to depend upon a political machine for political salvation.

I am not faultfinding. I am simply endeavoring to add what I may to the tide of sentiment which is daily bringing men of right ideas into closer relations with the details of political management. The spasms of activity among responsible citizens are becoming more frequent and more prolonged. The rumblings which for months gave warning of the New York volcano are heard in every city of the land. Indeed, we have good cause to hope that the time will soon come when all citizens will not only see the necessity, but will find the

courage to make, not spasmodic but continuous effort for decency in municipal government; that the time will come when public officials will be the product of a true consensus of all the units composing the body politic. When that time comes the principles of Civil Service Reform, as advocated by this League, will drop into place as a natural and necessary means to the desired end. What now you seek to do by legislative enactment will then be done by popular enactment; what now you seek to engraft upon the political tree will then appear as a natural and original part of the tree itself.

I do not mean to imply that your present work is premature or unworthy. To move men of affairs and incite them to the performance of commonplace duties, unaccompanied by laurel wreaths, or victor crowns, or financial gain, is a slow process, and any plan that will in the meantime mitigate the evils we now are suffering, ought to be fostered and applied. The skillful physician will sometimes treat a painful symptom lest the pain should wreck his patient before the seat of disease is under control. In constructing this house the workmen supported it by temporary braces until the final anchorage could be completed. Even if "Civil Service Reform" will but relieve a destructive symptom, even if it be but a temporary brace to sustain State and municipal honor until the anchor of good citizenship shall have been brought into play, it is worth the honest support of honest men.

There is no portion of our political structure where braces are in more demand than among the towering castles built by the feverish activity of city life. There is no portion of our body politic showing more painful symptoms than these centres of commerce, and art, and vice; of culture and religious energy and social depravity. There is no department of government wherein there is greater need that merit should be the sole passport to place, for merit only can cope successfully with the complicated conditions surrounding municipal placeholders. If a man obtain appointment to political posi-

tion as a reward for political service it is only natural that he should in turn be expected to use the position to reward political adherents, and in cities political adherents are so numerous and so close together it is only a wonder that more officials do not fall. I can but believe that party pride has much to do with the rectitude of many men under these trying circumstances, and in the absence of a "merit system" established by law, fidelity to party furnishes no inconsiderable protection to the Civil Service, even in cities. Yet if men in the city employ could know that their tenure of office depended solely upon their good behavior, who can doubt that the peoples' money would be more judiciously applied; that wrong-doers would be more summarily punished; that the incentive to shameless election frauds would be greatly reduced and the tone of political service resume somewhat its primitive virtue? Will a "merit system" law insure this? If so, no time should be lost in placing it upon the statute books of every State in the Union, and if this shall be done during my term of office the law, so far as it may concern the Mayor, shall receive fair and impartial application to the extent of his powers.

You will agree with me that the law is only as strong as the officers whose duty it is to enforce it; the strength of an officer depends much upon the sentiment back of him. A "merit system" law without a "merit system" sentiment would find few officers strong enough to give it honest enforcement. I do not wish to appear cap-tious, but we all must know that observance of a true stable public sentiment is as necessary in the proper administration of an office as in the obtaining of the office, and without this the official's power for good is practically annulled. This may be an unpleasant truth to many people, but it is a truth and the efficiently honest man will not waste his time combating it when he may be well employed guiding it. The fact that demagogues trifle with sentiment is no reason why honest men should ignore it; because foolish men are tossed about by waves of excitement is no reason why wise

men should not be guided by the current of sentiment beneath the waves. Does not this bring us to the conclusion that the noble work being done by this Association should be supplemented, especially in cities, by active, persistent efforts in all the stages of our electoral system on the part of all men who honestly desire good government?

In this great city we hear many sounds differing in quality and in the character of impression made upon our ears; we hear the clatter of heavy wagons on the granite paving, the clanging of street car bells, the screeching of locomotives, the tramp of thousands of people and a countless variety of noises; yet scientific men tell us that if we could place ourselves at a certain distance from the city in a position where no local sounds would interfere, that this vast variety of more or less unpleasant sounds would be merged into a perfect harmony constituting one of the notes in a musical scale. The theory of our system of government is that the voice of the people is the voice of God. This means not the voice of some of the people, but the voice of all the people. Our population is composed of a great variety of types, more or less distasteful to each other, yet if the voice of each and every type be heard in the affairs of State, however unpleasant the individual voice may seem, the result will be an harmonious note, and in ages to come, when our history shall be read free from local influences, that note will appear as the voice of God.

## **MUNICIPAL REFORM IMPOSSIBLE UNDER THE SPOILS SYSTEM.**

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BY CHARLES B. WILBY.

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All Reformers, and perhaps particularly we who agitate for a reform in the Civil Service, are frequently told that in our zeal for our hobby we unduly magnify its importance; that we have the special evil against which we are striving constantly in our line of vision and therefore do not see anything else; and so when we express the belief that Civil Service Reform is not only an indispensable part of any scheme for municipal reform but is a condition precedent to any permanent change for the better in municipal administration, or, in other words, that until the rank and file of its municipal servants are lifted beyond the reach of politics, there can be no lasting reform in the government of any municipality, that we exaggerate the effect of the spoils system upon the government of our cities. On the contrary I think we can show from the experience of our smaller and better governed communities, from the object lesson furnished by our misgoverned cities, by comparison with the well governed cities of Europe, as well as by other evidence and by reason that however true this criticism may generally be—and its frequent truth is but an evidence of that zeal which always assures final success—yet in this instance, though Reformers, we are not blind, but have found the truth.

In urging upon municipal reformers the importance of making the spoils system their first point of attack and Civil Service Reform the cornerstone of their good work, it may be taken for granted, I assume, that the spoils system means incompetence, wastefulness and

corruption, and that until the business of our cities is done on business principles as the work of any other business corporation would be done, it cannot be well done. All of this goes without saying.

What needs discussion is whether other suggestions for municipal reform will avail anything unless the spoils system is first rooted out, and also whether it is attempting too much to seek at the outset to wrest the patronage from the bosses.

No doubt most of the other remedies which are suggested for our municipal ills may be valuable when applied with that remedy of ours which we think attacks the source of the disease, but without a reformation in the methods of filling the subordinate or non-elective offices in our large cities, no thorough and permanent advance can be made toward the goal of good city government.

A bank may not be well located; its building may be inconveniently arranged, badly ventilated and improperly drained; its line of correspondents may be poorly selected; its cashier may be personally disagreeable; but the removal of all of these obstacles will not make the bank a successful one if its clerks and officers are chosen without reference to their honesty, capacity or business experience. No new charter filled with all the modern ideas, warranted to cure every form of municipal disease, can make a city's government good if it is in bad hands, for none of them administer themselves automatically.

On the other hand, honest and capable servants will produce good results under any municipal system.

I do not know of a municipality in which public servants are selected only because they are worthy and removed only when the public good demands a change, which is not well governed by its citizens without the aid of a boss.

On the other hand, wherever we find municipal misgovernment we find the spoils system in full blast and a boss or a ring of bosses in control entrenched behind the offices.

Nothing is to be gained by extended denunciation of our local despots or by multiplying the descriptions of

their methods, for these are practically the same everywhere, and everywhere their power ultimately depends upon the misuse of the municipal offices.

The crying evils of municipal misgovernment do not result directly from filling the lesser offices with incompetent and dishonest servants, who only produce waste and petty corruption. The greatest wrongs are committed by the improper characters who are put into the elective offices by the bosses with that power which the control of the smaller places gives them.

The influence to be enjoyed and the profits to be made in the administration of a large city are both so great as to attract to this business men of ability. The boss generally rises from the ranks and is an example of the survival of the fittest. Ignorant avarice never achieves more in this than in other fields.

The embryo boss is usually first put on the municipal pay roll as a reward for his activity in working for the local political machine at the primaries. Without the hope of this reward he would stick to his original calling of bartender or saloonkeeper or what not. By holding out the hope of similar payment to others he is able to organize a body of workers in his ward and by capacity, energy and industry climbs up the ladder of the spoils system, always paid by the taxpayers, though working for those who rob them.

The labor of the whole body of these ward workers results in the nominations for the elective offices. These are sold by the dominant boss or ring of bosses, sometimes for money, sometimes for influence, sometimes for promises of public contracts—and always for some other consideration than that of the fitness of the candidate, and so the whole structure rests upon the official patronage.

The offices whether elective or appointive are never given to those who will be useful to the city but only to those who will be useful and faithful to the boss. Every office-holder from the Mayor down to the meanest street scavenger owes his place to his fidelity to the boss.

If the petty places could not be used, the allegiance



of the ward workers could not be secured, and without their work the primaries could not be controlled and the nominations dictated.

The nominations obtained, the boss judiciously appor-tions the public advertising, and, aided by the inert and inane partisanship of the adherents of that political party under the name of which he works, carries the elections.

We are frequently told that the good citizens outnumber the bad and that if the better class of people would attend to their political duties and go to the primaries, the bosses could be kept down.

No doubt there is too much political indifference among those who pay the taxes in our large cities, but the odds against them are so great as to breed the indifference of despair. I imagine this cry of "Why don't you go to the primaries?" like other similar phrases, probably coined originally by or for the bosses, must amuse them when repeated by their unwitting allies.

It is as though the victim of a gambler who plays with loaded dice, should be advised to stop grumbling over his losses and pay more attention to the game.

Unhampered by any scruples, giving his whole time to the business of politics, in which he is an expert, and armed with the public purse which is filled from his victims' pockets, the boss can laugh at any effort of the taxpayers to drive him from his citadel so long as he retains his best weapon—the patronage.

The good citizens are like the rawest militia arrayed against the regular troops of the boss. The former can often spare but little time from their various pursuits, and, having already been taxed to provide the sinews of war for their opponents, make further contributions with reluctance, while the latter, living at the public crib, excel at that which is their only trade.

Once in a while a revolt of the people is successful here and there at the primaries or throughout a whole city at an election, especially where the people have the aid of an independent and incorruptible press. Without this ally nothing can ever be done, and even with it

only while the popular rebellion lasts. After a time the excitement and the interest are sure to subside and then the work flags. One by one the Reformers' ward organizations break up, and little by little the machine recovers its ground, working up from the lower wards which it has never lost, until the diminishing band of Reformers throw up their hands. The necessary concerted action cannot be maintained.

It is like trying to keep a leaky vessel afloat with the pumps. If you stop to rest you are lost, and you cannot go on forever.

The history of every municipal reform movement on these lines proves this. There never was a better fight than that made by the Committee of One Hundred in Philadelphia, but the Reformers could not hold out against the spoils system and seeing nothing before them but a continuous, unending contest, gave up the struggle after waging it manfully for three years.

When municipal reformers have failed to control the primaries so as to secure good regular party nominations, they usually try to elect independent nominees or to accomplish their object by selecting from the regular candidates. These two are the methods most ordinarily adopted by downtrodden taxpayers when seeking relief.

Independent candidates may be elected occasionally by the aid of an independent press, during an insurrection of the better classes and when the municipal election is isolated, but without the combination of these three necessary influences, this plan is generally followed in vain.

By selecting the better nominees from the candidates of the regular parties and giving them the endorsement of the Citizens' Movement or placing their names upon its ticket, something can be accomplished under the stimulus of a popular excitement and with the aid of a non-partisan press, but if the boss understands his business this plan will not defeat him long. If his place of business is one in which either party has a well-established majority, he will soon thwart the Reformers by

forming a trust, as it were, with the hungry manager of the minority party whose nominations he can, by a small outlay, usually make entirely subservient to his own ideas and needs, so that after this combination has been made good citizens who would choose between the regular nominations would in either event select the candidate of the boss.

On the other hand, if the regular parties are evenly divided, then instead of one boss there are two who work in partnership, whose nominations are equally bad, and the choice between their candidates furnishes no inducement for keeping up a citizens' organization.

It is thought by some that a separation of municipal from national and State elections can accomplish much for better city government.

It is our experience in Cincinnati, where our city elections occur in the spring, that the bosses can use even then their partisan dupes, who are ready to aid them in playing off against each other the people of opposite political beliefs. Their cry of traitor and mugwump is well-nigh as useful at a city election held six months or a year before or after a general election, as on the same day.

The party discipline must be kept up and the partisan forces kept in line, so the party organs call for strict allegiance and the straight ticket. "Let the party be reformed by its friends, but do not desert it in the face of the enemy! If you do not like the nominations, why don't you go to the primaries and try to make them better? Reform the party if it needs it, from within, but do not try to ruin it."

With these and similar cries, the people are whipped into line as though national issues were at stake, while the bosses sit behind the scenes and grin, as sentiment and ignorance do their bidding.

Some attention has been attracted to a recent by-election in Cincinnati, at which we defeated our boss in a small way, and which might be supposed to furnish an argument in favor of the efficacy of separate municipal elections, but the conditions were too abnormal to make this a useful instance.

The only office to be filled was a judicial one as to which people feel their party ties most loosely ; we had the aid of the *Tribune*, a regular party newspaper, though not an organ, which threw its greatest influence against the candidate of its own party, who had been named by the boss ; the nomination of the other party was good, the candidate a man of great popularity, and the Bar Association took part in the campaign so as to arouse the popular interest unusually.

Another one of the remedies proposed is that municipal parties shall be organized in our large cities for the purpose of fighting the bosses at local elections.

This, it seems to me, is but another name for what has been tried very often and in many places without any permanent success.

All independent movements for municipal reform, whether made under the name of a Citizen's Movement or a Municipal Reform Association, or a Committee of One Hundred, may be in each case the temporary organization of a municipal party where the Australian ballot law or any similar provision permits independent nominations, and the experience of every man who has ever engaged in one of these movements which undertook to elect independent nominees has taught him that they cannot succeed, except while the popular interest is at fever heat, so long as the bosses possess the cohesive power of the patronage.

The necessary tension of activity, intensity of interest and drain of expense cannot be kept up so as to enable the organization to hold together with sufficient firmness to resist the constant disintegrating pressure of the gang.

If the boss was unable to support his minions out of the public purse that pressure would be removed, and should the better government of our cities *then* require the maintenance of a municipal party or Reform Association or Committee of Citizens, such a body could without difficulty maintain its organization while the popular pulse was normal.

We are told that it is impossible to hope to take the

offices out of politics in our large cities, but if this can be done with federal offices it should the more readily be done with those of our municipalities, where no one can claim that any policy is to be carried out but the good business policy of doing the city's business economically and well.

We can remember how the larger postoffices were, only fifteen years ago, the centres of every local political shuffle and deal, and lo ! as by the touch of a wand they were suddenly lifted up out of the debauching influence of the political game.

There was a time when the postoffice at Cincinnati was the headquarters of the triumvirate which then ruled the city, and the spoils of that office were one of its principal sources of power ; but since 1883 any country boy has had substantially the same chance of getting a position in that office as if he had come armed with a letter of introduction from the local despot, and I have not been able to learn in eleven years of more than one or two dismissals from that office without good cause.

I can speak of this with some degree of certainty because the employees of this office during that time have been aware that I would investigate any dismissal which was thought to be improper, and in the many cases which I investigated I found none which were wholly unwarranted, though in one or two cases I thought the dismissed man had unwarily fallen into a trap purposely set to make him violate one of the rules.

In an office employing 325 men in 1883 and 430 now in the classified service, this showing for eleven years reflects great credit upon the men who have administered the reformed regulations.

If this can be done in the postoffice under the federal statute, it can be done in the city hall under a State law.

We are told, however, that professional politicians, or those who live on what can be made out of politics under the spoils system, are indispensable for doing the necessary political drudgery in our cities, and that unless the petty offices can be used to incite men to

this work, the very essential multifarious details of our complicated system of elections will be neglected, or in other words, that the power of the patronage alone causes the wheels of our political machinery to revolve.

Can it be that there is no other interest strong enough to keep up the needed action in this matter?

There is no doubt a large amount of dismal detail in the work which must be done pertaining to our many primaries and other elections. There are few men of leisure to do it, and still fewer men of leisure likely to be willing to do it.

But how was it before the days of Jackson and Marcy?

This work was done for forty years before the present system of government by the spoilsmen for the spoils was inaugurated.

Do we not see men about us everywhere, who, without any hope of reward, nor any inducement but that which springs from a sense of duty, give their time at odd hours to the dreary drudgery of work in churches and other societies? Look at the charitable organizations throughout the country, the many fraternities. The work done in these and similar fields is petty and laborious and is done in the dark and gratuitously. Is not the feeling of patriotism as strong as the sense of duty which inspires these unselfish laborers? Even without that higher motive, there is in the nature of all mankind, and particularly of the American, a fondness for the agreeable sense of self-importance or for doing something in association with others, which would furnish a motive to those who lacked a sense of public duty sufficient to impel them to do this work.

In numberless suburban communities throughout the country where the political machinery is in the hands of the better class of people who usually compose those communities, we find that the political chores are attended to promptly and cheerfully by those who have no motive but their sense of duty, and even in the lower wards and poorest quarters of our cities I believe men could be found who would do this work from proper motives.

Under the spoils system, the men who would do it unselfishly are shouldered out of the way by the roughs in the pay of the bosses, but if the bosses had not the offices and the assessments which the use of the offices gives them, they could not retain their hordes of ward workers. Then the business of boss would become unprofitable, and if he was driven to an honest means of earning his living, his minions would follow him and our political machinery would fall again into the hands of its rightful managers.

For many years we have had in the misrule of the city of New York a most striking object lesson showing the results of the spoils system in its highest development. Recent events in that city have interested and encouraged the friends of good government all over the country. A long step forward has been taken, but unless the next step is toward compelling the enforcement of the excellent New York State Reform law and extending its operation if necessary, I fear nothing permanent will have been accomplished.

The necessity for this reform has been recognized in the new New York constitution, but more is needed than merely to print it again even in the constitution.

While the Hill and Tammany machines could control the appointment of the officers whose duty it was to execute that law, it was of course evaded and violated. The late investigation of the State Commission seems to show that if by accident a commissioner gave signs of doing his duty he was forthwith removed. Apparently there has been no pretence of enforcing the law in New York City, the only obvious effect of which has been to give Tammany a few more offices.

At a dinner given to Dr. Parkhurst in New York on the 27th of last month by the City Vigilance Committee at which many of New York's most distinguished citizens spoke, nothing was said, according to the accounts which I have read, about improving their present opportunity to put the offices effectually out of the reach of the tiger, although almost every speaker made some suggestions as to what should be done next.

Dr. Parkhurst is reported to have said that he wanted to see "a municipal administration which compels its employees to earn the salt for their porridge."

That is quite right ; but if Dr. Parkhurst would now devote some of his wonderful energy to the task of compelling the proper enforcement in New York City of the Civil Service Law and to procuring any necessary further legislation in that direction, he might be able to see what he desires. Under the system by which New York's municipal employees are selected, it is not expected that they shall earn the salt for their porridge. That is not what they are selected for, and never will be until the merit system controls their selection.

The whole country will regret it if the fruits of their recent great triumph are not secured by those good citizens of New York City who have made such a gallant fight for good government, but they should take some steps, now while their enemy is demoralized and in flight, to disarm him.

Mr. Goff is quoted as saying to an interviewer a few days ago that he believed the power of Tammany was crushed. Even Mr. Tilden made the same mistake after he and the original Committee of Seventy had overturned the Tweed ring in 1871. When it was then suggested to him that he should terminate Tammany's corporate existence, Mr. Tilden is said to have replied that there was no further danger to be feared from Tammany; that it could never regain its political power, but that it might be useful in its original field as a charitable organization. Yet it was not long before the tiger cat was on its feet again and, in a few years after Mr. Tilden's prophecy, Tammany was again in possession of every department of the city government and had no opposition worth mentioning.

This mistake should not be made now.

If the City Club, the Good Government Clubs and the Committee of Seventy, whose members did the effective work which resulted in the election of Mr. Strong, shall succeed in the efforts which they are now making to cause the Civil Service laws to be honestly enforced



in New York City, then can we hope that Tammany may be kept down, but not until then.

The twenty million dollars which, I am told, is that city's annual pay roll is a tonic which would soon revive a very sick boss, who without this tonic might not recover. This sum represents the salaries of the elective as well as the appointive offices and all wages which Tammany has at its disposal every year, and here lies the original source of Tammany's power.

Other communities might possibly succeed in throwing off the yoke of their misrulers without completely abolishing the spoils system, but the conditions in New York City with its large proportion of ignorant foreigners, so many of that nationality which seems to have a genius for bossism and misrule, and so many ignorant and vicious, are such as to make any attempt at reform hopeless, until the poison which is bred in every direction by the abuse of the official patronage has been driven from the whole municipal structure. A forcible suggestion in this direction has come from our friend, the veteran Civil Service Reformer, Mr. Dorman B. Eaton, who has recommended the adoption in New York of the admirable Boston system for the registration of city laborers which has already been applied so effectively in the Brooklyn Navy Yard and in that city, New Bedford and Cambridge.

A writer in the November *Atlantic Monthly* insists that good government in cities can never be obtained "except through the forces of personal leadership and of such sympathy and enthusiasm as are aroused by a common cause." He refers to Tammany as the best object lesson in city government and tells us that the rank and file of Tammany are in the main honest men and good citizens; that they number about two hundred thousand, and that because the patronage which Tammany controls numbers, as he says, only about twenty-seven thousand places, consequently the control of the patronage is not the source of Tammany's power.

The premises from which this conclusion is drawn, are, I think, not correctly stated. The vote of Tam.

many at the last election was only half of this writer's estimate, and I do not believe that those one hundred thousand voters whom we might call the rank and file of Tammany are in the main honest men and good citizens, knowing what the Lexow Committee investigation has told them.

Secondly, the number of places covered by the patronage of the city and county of New York is more than twenty-seven thousand. I think to this number should be added the city laborers who number several thousand and the large army of laborers who work for the contractors whose jobs depend upon the fidelity of themselves and their employees to Tammany.

When we consider in addition the large class of criminals who are kept in slavery to Tammany by the immunity which it grants to them, as well as the large army of camp followers which trails in the wake of the place-holders depending upon an empty promise or waiting for a chance vacancy, it seems to me that it is surprising that the Tammany vote at the last election did not exceed one hundred thousand. The smallness of this vote furnishes almost conclusive proof, to my mind, that the place-holders and hangers-on of other sorts which I have mentioned, are the only voters under Tammany's control, and that there are no honest men and good citizens who follow Tammany after the confession wrung from it by Mr. Goff, of the most horrible story of official crime the civilized world ever heard.

New York City is perhaps the birthplace of the agitation for this Reform, which we consider primarily essential and which this organization represents, and I appreciate how supererogatory are any suggestions to those pioneers, but what I have said may, I hope, be tolerated as showing some appreciation of the gospel which they have preached so devoutly and with so much ability.

It has been suggested in New York since the last election, as it was urged upon Mr. Tilden twenty-three years ago, that the Tammany Society's charter should be annulled.

I am unable to see how any good for the government

of the city of New York can result from this. It is not the corporate existence of the Tammany Society or Columbian Order which menaces that city, but it is the possession by some of the members of that organization of the political machinery by which that city is misgoverned, which is the evil to be eradicated.

As is probably well understood by most of those who are before me, the corporation which was chartered in 1805 as the Tammany Society or Columbian Order and which owns the building on Fourteenth Street known as Tammany Hall, has, as I understand, little or nothing to do as a corporation with the misgovernment of New York City. That society leases the hall and other rooms in its building to the Democratic-Republican General Committee, which is commonly known as Tammany Hall or Tammany, and the men who compose that committee and the whole organization which works under the name of Tammany could quite as well accomplish its object by any other name or under the same name, notwithstanding the annulling of the charter of its landlord.

There is perhaps some advantage in having other than an individual's name for a local political machine. The name of the boss or the principal beneficiary, brings out too strongly the personal character of his despotism, and on this account the use of some other name is desirable in spite of the personal following which the boss generally has. Doubtless there was a time when the name of Tammany added much to the strength of that organization. In its early days and particularly before it succeeded in 1821 in removing the property qualification from the elective franchise in New York, there was much in its history of which its members might well be proud, but of late years the name has so come to represent the incarnation of political wickedness that it may well be questioned if it is not on the whole a source of weakness notwithstanding the large number of those in the lower wards with whom the mere name is a power. I cannot see therefore what can be gained by annulling the charter of the Tammany Society.

A boss by any other name can rule as well so long as he controls the spoils.

There is a strong, unreasoning prejudice against the merit system which will make the change from the present one a matter of time and great difficulty. I do not refer to the hostility of the bosses and their followers—their prejudice against the Reform is not at all unreasoning, but is as well founded as the hostility of their great predecessor to holy water—I refer to the plain, honest citizen who does not know what Civil Service Reform means. He has been taught by the spoilsmen and their allies and dupes to think of it as some complicated mugwump scheme to entice the unwary American people into a sort of monarchical trap, in which they will forthwith be devoured by an aristocracy of office-holders or some other hobgoblin.

The written examinations particularly are the object of this popular prejudice. Now, it should be remembered that written competitive examinations are not a necessary part of every scheme for Civil Service Reform. No other means of ascertaining the fitness of an applicant is better than a written examination, particularly if the place is of a clerical nature.

Very often an oral examination may be sufficient, but even if no inquiry as to the fitness of a candidate can be had other than permitting the qualifying official to look at him, this test would be valuable if the examiner was well selected. Under it I imagine five-sixths of the present servants of our large cities would be rejected. But, if necessary, to begin with and to meet the popular prejudice, all pretence of ascertaining the fitness of the applicant may be abandoned and yet much good will result, if mere fixity of tenure during good behavior is secured. The good-behavior clause would soon weed out many incumbents who now disgrace the service of our cities, and for the rest experience would do much. Experience will in time make even poorly selected servants useful, but with the frequent changes of the present system they are not able to become useful even in this way.

In relying upon fixity of tenure alone, the appointing power and the power to determine what is good cause for dismissal must not be vested in the same persons or in individuals or boards which are dominated by the same influences. Otherwise we would merely have the present system over again, except that the requirement that dismissals should not be made except for cause would be expressed in the law, instead of implied only, as it is now, and a spoilsman does not hesitate to violate an express provision any more than an implied one.

It is especially necessary where the approved tests for determining the fitness of appointments have not been secured, that the power to determine what is good cause should be given to some authority which is removed from the domination of the boss, such as a board appointed by the Governor might be, and if this board does its duty the lack of the qualification for appointment will not be felt so seriously as might be supposed.

The misuse of the patronage by a boss or any spoilsman is not possible to a great extent where vacancies cannot be created at will. If vacancies were not made except by death, resignation, or for good cause shown, the municipal service would lose much of its political cash value.

Prior to the year 1886 the police force of Cincinnati was changed almost from top to bottom whenever either party lost control, and owing to improper appointments and frequent changes it became probably the worst branch of the city's service. To-day it is by far the best, and is the one branch of the service, the patronage of which cannot be used by the boss for his own purposes. This regeneration is the result of the application of one of the principles of Civil Service Reform, through such a plan as I suggest.

The Mayor has power to make appointments to the force, subject to the approval of a Board of Police Commissioners appointed by the Governor, but he has nothing to do with creating vacancies, which only can be made by the Police Board upon finding good cause after full investigation at which the accused has the right to be heard.

This Board is bi-partisan, consisting of four members, and three votes are required for the passage of any measure.

I believe that bi-partisan boards, as a general thing, are the poorest device ever suggested to or by a municipal reformer. I think Mr. Seth Low first called them "double-partisan" boards. Nevertheless, for eight years this combination has worked admirably in the Cincinnati Police Department, because the little leaven of the merit system which it contains has done its inevitable good work.

Not having the power of appointment this Board is not tempted to make vacancies without sufficient reason. The appointments made by the Mayor are undoubtedly dictated by the local boss, but he has no chance to make vacancies and so can make but very few appointments.

The law provides that all positions of higher grade on the force shall be filled by promotion from the ranks, and as a basis for these promotions, yearly written and oral examinations are held.

Although none but physical examinations are provided for ascertaining the fitness of the candidates for appointment, still the Board has always made it a practice before confirming an appointment to call the candidate before it for inspection and he generally is subjected to something of an oral examination.

The offensive words "Civil Service Reform" are not branded on such a statute as this, and when looked at casually by a boss, its effect might escape his notice as it did, I imagine, when the Cincinnati law was passed.

When the good results of such a statute are recognized and felt by the people, a wise boss will not attempt to cause its repeal. Moreover, like the grocer who sells sugar at cost to attract trade, our Cincinnati boss points with pride to the Police Department as an evidence of the beneficence of his reign.

With a Governor inclined to falsely canvass election returns or do anything of that sort, a board under such a system as I have described would be made to run in harmony with the local political machine and then, of

course, the plan would fail. Every servant would know that his tenure of office depended not upon his fidelity to his duty, but, on the contrary, frequently upon his willingness to neglect his duty, and always upon the will of the boss, and if the boss demanded that a police officer should do his will at elections or should shut his eyes to violations of the law, the officer would have to do as he was bid or lose his position. But we do not fear that the Police Department of Cincinnati will ever be dragged back into the hands of the spoilsmen, for I know of no community which having felt the advantages of the merit system has permitted those advantages to be taken from it. The Reform makes converts of all who have an opportunity to see what it accomplishes.

Men who have been educated in the spoilsman's school of politics yield to the influence of its practical results. The recent history of the service in the Departments at Washington furnishes notable proof of this, and one of our largest postoffices has, I think, recently furnished another. Such being the fact, municipal reformers should not hesitate to accept as their entering wedge any concession in the direction of the merit system. If either of its principles can be carried into the law, even in a disfigured shape, it will stay and grow and bear such fruit that in time the demand for more cannot be resisted.

## THE REFORM OF THE CONSULAR SERVICE.

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BY HON. OSCAR S. STRAUS.

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Within the past two years numerous articles have appeared in our daily papers and in our magazines calling attention to the defects in our consular service, and to suggested reforms. I refer more especially to those written by William Slade, formerly Consul at Brussels, in the *Forum* of April, 1893; by William F. Wharton, the late Assistant Secretary of State, in the *North American Review* for April, 1894; to a series of replies by twelve ex-Ministers of the United States upon "The Consular Service and the Spoils System," contained in the *Century Magazine* for June and October, 1894; and to an article by Albert H. Washburn, in the *Atlantic Monthly* for August, 1894; and to one by Henry White, late Secretary of the United States Embassy at London, in the *North American Review* of the present month. All of these authorities, who have had experience in our foreign service, are unanimous in recommending reforms; that the service should be divorced from the spoils system; that there should be certain established qualifications, and that there should be a permanent tenure of office and regulations for promotion.

The subject has also received attention in several of our commercial associations throughout the country, notably in the Boston Chamber of Commerce and in the Boston Merchants' Association, and in the New York Board of Trade and Transportation. Resolutions were adopted by the National Board of Trade on January 23, 1894, to the effect that the agitations for the reform of the consular service be pushed by the organization and its constituent bodies with a view of placing the service "on a footing corresponding with that of other nations, removing it from the spoils system."



The merit system, which but a few years ago was looked at askance as being the fanciful dream of a small body of professional theorists, such as Eaton, Curtis and Schurz, is to-day carried forward by one of the mightiest currents of public opinion, so that the distinguished apostles of Civil Service Reform are recognized as far-seeing and practical reformers. The President in his last annual message, referring to this subject, has justly said: "The advantages to the public service of an adherence to the principles of Civil Service Reform are constantly more apparent, and nothing is so encouraging to those in official life who honestly desire good government as the increasing appreciation by our people of these advantages."

The people are perhaps less familiar with the duties of our diplomatic and consular agents than with any other branch of the public service. This is primarily due to the fact that the duties devolving upon these agents are not performed at home under the eyes of our citizens, but abroad, in foreign lands. This ignorance attaches also to the applicants themselves for appointment to that service. From my personal observations and experience, I feel justified in saying that not one applicant out of ten has a definite and correct idea of the functions of a Consul, leaving entirely aside whether he possesses the qualifications to discharge them. That such is true is due to the system, or lack of system, in their selection and appointment. To make appointments under such a system is bad enough, but to repeat this method every four years is to multiply, at these frequent intervals, all the evils the system is capable of, and at the same time to disregard the fitness acquired by experience.

The functions of Consuls are twofold: their duties as such, and the benefits they can render to the commerce of the country by conveying useful information. In addition to the general and defined powers they possess under international law and treaties, our tariff, immigration and health laws impose duties of manifold and unusual character. At seaports our Consuls have to

inspect the manifests of vessels leaving for the United States, to see that they conform to the requirements of the tariff laws. They are in a degree given police jurisdiction over commercial vessels, and charged with the duties to investigate shipwrecks and save property from wrecked vessels, with all disputes between seamen and captains, with arresting deserters and with sending back shipwrecked and discharged sailors. In time of war these duties become more exacting and extensive. They must protect the commercial and naval interests of their country against arbitrary acts.

They must frequently take in charge, in the country where they are stationed, the effects of citizens dying there and administer the estate for the benefit of their heirs. They must verify invoices of goods exported to the United States, and for the purpose of preventing frauds and under-valuations they are expected to have a special knowledge of the actual value of the infinite variety of merchandise so that they can control the statements made to them ; for our system does not accept the valuation of goods at the price actually paid for them, but attempts to arrive at market value, upon a theoretical basis, apart from the purchase in question. Reports upon some fifty and more different subjects are required to be made to the Department of State, covering commercial, agricultural and industrial interests of the country wherein they reside, tariffs, finance, currency, public loans and taxation. Besides this they, from time to time, are called upon to make special reports upon subjects requested by the Department. These reports are issued monthly, and when made by men having an accurate knowledge of the country, conversant with the language and with its resources, such reports are valuable. Legal instruments of all kinds are attested by them, and depositions are taken before them. In addition to all these there are many more purely commercial and clerical duties. In non-Christian countries where we, in concert with European nations, are unwilling to leave the property and lives of our citizens to the judgment of native tribunals, our Consuls are charged with civil

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and criminal jurisdiction, known by the general designation of extra-territorial rights, provided for by treaties and regulated by our laws. By these laws Consuls are empowered to arraign, try all citizens of the United States charged with offences committed in such countries, to sentence them to fine and imprisonment, and even death. They have authority also to try and determine civil causes arising between our citizens and between our citizens and foreigners. Coördinate and appellate powers in such countries are vested in our Ministers. It is only in China, where the matter in dispute exceeds two thousand five hundred dollars, there can be a further appeal to the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of California. Until our recent treaty with Japan, now awaiting the Senate's confirmation, we had the same extra-territorial rights in that country.

Our Consuls are charged with this extra-territorial jurisdiction in a varying degree in Turkey, Persia, Morocco, Muscat, Samoa, Siam and Tripoli. We have treaties of a similar nature also with Algeria and Tunis, but these two last-named countries being occupied by France, we have, since the establishment of French tribunals, largely given up this jurisdiction. Our legislation in regard to this jurisdiction is very defective and ill-defined; several efforts in the past twenty years to define, organize and systematize it have failed in Congress. President Cleveland directed attention to the subject anew in his message of December, 1885.

This enumeration of the functions of Consuls is far from complete, but sufficient has been stated to show how varied, important and extensive are the duties devolving upon them, and that some other qualifications than those exacted under the present system are in the highest degree requisite for a proper, efficient and creditable discharge of the trust which our Consuls often assume in ignorance. The fault is easy to find. It is not with the Department of State or with the President, or with both combined—it is attributable to the system. The evils of the system during the past ten years

have become more glaring than at any previous period of our history, because the party in control of the Government has changed three times, so that our Consuls have been on the march to and fro ever since ; to apply a diplomatic phrase, it has been for the most part a "transit period."

Under the present system it often happens that persons by reason of their linguistic knowledge, make applications for appointment in German- or French-speaking countries, but are sent to a country where Spanish, Italian, or some other tongue is spoken, and *vice versa*, thereby augmenting the difficulties for the discharge of their duties. It is self-evident that one of the first, but by no means the only requisite to enable a Consul to properly discharge his duties, is familiarity with the language of the country to which he is sent. I have known very competent Consuls who did not possess this requisite, and very incompetent ones who did ; yet this only proves that the former would have been better equipped had they also been familiar with the language.

During Secretary Seward's administration it was the practice of the State Department to require applicants for consulships to pass an examination prescribed by the Department, to test their general knowledge and their acquaintance with the modern languages. Later it became the custom to have such examinations conducted by the chief clerk, the examiner of claims, and the chief of the Consular Bureau.

The Civil Service Commission, in a report bearing date April 15, 1874, and signed by Mr. Eaton and his associates, states : "It not having been found at present convenient, if expedient, to bring Consuls within the general rules and regulations of competition, and the clerks in the State Department sustaining confidential relations to the head of that Department, and being few in number, so that the character and qualifications of each can be fully investigated by the head of that Department, therefore only general examinations, without competition, are applied to applicants for such

clerkships and for consular offices generally, pursuant to an order of the President (Grant) made March 14, 1873. These examinations are upon subjects relative to the official service required, stated in writing, and the written answers are preserved in the State Department, and among other subjects included are international law and the regulations for the consular service of the United States."

The reasons why this system fell into disuse during Johnson and Grant's Administrations and continued with added force until the present, is attributable to the ever-increasing hunger of the spoilsmen, and to the very probable fact that the spirit of the regulations was not at any time strictly complied with.

As to the necessity for reforms in the present consular system, I assume no one will seriously question, and no words need be wasted on that phase of the subject. The only questions are, what shall these reforms be, and how shall they be made? The limit of the time on this occasion will only admit of some general observations, the details must be left to those who may be entrusted with the formulation of the laws and regulations embodying the needed reforms and changes.

The Constitution provides that the President "shall nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate shall appoint ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls." It is evident that no Congressional enactment can abrogate this constitutional right of the President, and perhaps not abridge it. The result is possible that any regulations made by one President could be entirely ignored by his successor. This fact, however, need not discourage us, for if a President will at the outset of his term adopt regulations for reforming his service and make his appointments accordingly, it may perhaps be assumed that the intelligent public opinion will influence and sustain his successor in following the same course.

To reform the service, four conditions are essential: fitness, tenure of office for good behavior, promotion, and adequate compensation. Tenure of office and com-

pensation can be provided for by Congressional enactment ; whether the other two conditions can be similarly provided for is open to doubt. Fitness need not necessarily be determined by competition ; on the other hand, an examination under the supervision of the Civil Service Commission and the State Department would establish an eligible list from which the President could make his appointments, and in a like manner promotions from lower to higher grades could be similarly regulated. If there were no constitutional objection such as above indicated, it would be better to regulate the entire subject by Congressional enactments, using the best portions of the English and Continental systems as a basis. Those systems are well known and need not be here dwelt upon. A bill introduced at the last session by Senator Morgan in the Senate and by Representative Storer in the House is now before Congress. It is entitled "A Bill to increase the efficiency of the foreign service of the United States, and to provide for the reorganization of the Department of State and the Consular and Diplomatic service." Its repealing clause I regard as ill-advised, in that as it stands it would, in my opinion, take away the right of our Consuls to exercise extra-territorial jurisdiction. I doubt also the advisability of several of its other provisions, and the summary manner it relegates the service to men under forty-five years of age. I fully agree that heads of missions should not be subject to such regulations. It is best that the President's hands should be free to make his selections for these posts as he thinks best, and as the occasion may demand. This freedom the President has time and again used with the most advantageous results, and is one of the chief reasons why our diplomacy, especially in trying times, has been equal to the emergency and that our representatives have been able to cope with the most skilled and distinguished diplomats of the old world.

Our consular service consists of about seven hundred and seventy-five offices, of which three hundred and thirty are principal offices, and the remaining four hun-

dred and forty-five are agencies. A consular agent is subordinate to the principal office within whose jurisdiction he comes. It is created at the instance of the principal consular office or of the people of the place itself, with the consent, however, of the Department of State. He is paid no salary. His compensation is derived chiefly from certification of invoices and unofficial fees, which he has to share with the principal officer. These fees, coming from agencies up to one thousand dollars, he is allowed to retain. These agencies are usually created to accommodate merchants who export or sell merchandise to our country and who desire near them a consular office for the authentication of invoices. These agents are, with few exceptions, foreigners residing in the place and usually engaged in business. These agencies could with propriety and advantage be dispensed with and where necessary Consuls should be appointed. The additional amount the Government would receive in fees from the principal offices, would, it is estimated, suffice for the salaries of Consuls thus appointed. All fees of every kind should be abolished, and all Consuls should be salaried; the additional amount that would be carried into the Treasury by this process would suffice to a great extent to increase the salaries of many of our Consuls who are underpaid. This would result in improvement in many directions, it would in itself secure a higher class of officials, all of whom would be citizens of our country, and would do away with many petty exactions that are fostered under the present system.

Under the Civil Service Law the tenure of service is permanent. Every argument in its favor applies with equal if not added force to the consular service. In our home Departments even if a great number of removals be made by an incoming Administration, care is usually taken not to seriously interrupt the continuity of the work in those Departments. With the removal of our Consuls and the sending of new and inexperienced men in their places, serious inconveniences result and it frequently happens that advantages gained and rights

secured, through the ability and experience of a capable Consul, are entirely lost under his inexperienced successor. How can we expect that our Consuls should be efficient in their efforts to extend our commerce in the markets of the world when we are periodically removing those who have acquired some knowledge of the country and experience in their duties, and replacing them by new men who have all this to learn anew? In this way we are continually under a disadvantage in competing with the trained, experienced Consuls of other nations who are familiar with the language of the country and long in office and stimulated by the hope of promotion, by every consideration to perfect themselves in the discharge of their duties, because it is their life career. Experience has proven that tenure of office, dependent on good behavior, and the hope of promotion, are the two strongest incentives to good official work. I have known Consuls who had every inclination to perfect themselves for the discharge of their duties but were deterred from applying themselves to acquiring the difficult Oriental languages of the country because they knew with the change of Administration they would in all probability be removed. Another evil resulting from this system is that in many of our consulates we have clerks who are natives of the country, who receive a small, insufficient salary, but because of their familiarity with the routine of the office and the foreign languages, are practically permanent. Our Consuls come and go, these clerks stay, and the result often is that these native underpaid clerks, who can have but little if any allegiance to our country, in fact, have never been in it, acquire more consular influence than their migrating chiefs.

In criticising our foreign service we are apt to infer that our Consuls have invariably discharged their duties negligently and incompetently. 'This is not true; on the contrary, at some of our principal posts, where special care was taken in making the selection, and at such posts where men, after having acquired experience, have been continued, these have generally discharged



their duties well and, in many instances, with remarkable ability. While saying this we must not fail to recognize that permanency of tenure and adequate salaries and systematized method of determining fitness would insure more uniformity, eliminate many of the evils and elevate the service.

Various and diverging methods for bringing about such improvement have been recommended. The one outlined by Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt I regard as supplying the most essential requirements, and is simple. He says: "I would divide the Consuls, as far as may be, into grades, according to their salaries and the importance of the duties they have to perform. Then it should be provided that no man could be appointed to any higher grade save by promotion from the one immediately below it, and that before promotion he must serve a minimum period of, say, a year in that grade. Then before receiving his appointment he should be required to undergo a rigid examination, non-competitive, at the State Department, upon his knowledge of foreign languages, and to test his fitness, not merely to the low post he is seeking, but his fitness to enter a service where he may, by diligence and industry, rise to the very highest position."

In conclusion, let me emphasize whatever be the details of the methods of the reforms, they should have in view four conditions: first, higher qualification; second, more permanent tenure; third, promotion for efficiency and experience, and fourth, adequate and graded salaries. By these means the service will be raised to the rank of a useful and important career, whose honors will be competed for by our young men of ability and learning, who will seek to qualify themselves for the proper discharge of its duties. We will thereby raise the dignity and prestige of the nation in the remotest corners of the world, and our commerce will in time receive every assistance that can be rendered by a well equipped, thoroughly trained and experienced consular service.

# THE THEORY AND THE PRACTICE OF CIVIL SERVICE REFORM.

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BY HON. WILLIAM DUDLEY FOULKE.

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The people of America judge slowly but very justly. It takes a long time to get a hearing from 70 millions of human beings. Under ordinary circumstances many years are needed before a new thought can soak into the soil of our political life. But the slower the process the better the result. The storm of some popular tumult may cover the surface with a flood, but the waters will dry again and leave no traces, while the steady infiltration of a constant rain will produce at least abundant verdure and harvest.

The people are often mistaken in their estimates of men. They cannot deal successfully with the details of administration. The problem submitted to them ought not to be too complex. But upon a plain question of principle or policy, with time enough to think about it, they display an excellence of judgment which will be the wonder of history.

It took them many years to make up their minds in regard to slavery, but their judgment when finally expressed was wholly sound. In 1864, they wisely resolved to maintain the national integrity at whatever cost. At a later period they determined to gather all the constitutional fruits of a sanguinary and costly war, and it was not until the party by which these things were done had become contaminated by long continuance in power that they wisely resolved to change the instrument of their sovereignty.

The varying fortunes of politics during the last ten years will be, to the careful student of their causes, no sign of vacillation, but rather the evidence of whole-

some reproofs administered successively to each party for its failure to fulfill just expectations. The people have adopted a course wiser than that of any section, faction or class. The ultimate result of all the recent changes will be better than if either of the great political organizations felt that it had full leave to work its will upon the nation. Republicanism will hesitate to press to its utmost verge a dangerous system, and Democracy will pause before it again barter legislation and trifles with its solemn obligations. It is not the cant of the demagogue but the sober language of truth to say that when the people have a chance to speak, they speak wisely and well.

And thus it was that the people of New York spoke at their recent election on the question of Civil Service Reform. A constitution framed by a convention of their immediate representatives provided for appointments and promotions upon competitive examinations. This was the first time such a provision was ever submitted to a popular vote, and the Empire State, through whose gateway the spoils system first entered American politics, has been the first to incorporate in its organic law the essential principles of Civil Service Reform.

And to whatever community this measure shall be hereafter submitted, if the people have time enough to think it over and fully understand the meaning of it, they will adopt it. It is to contribute my mite to this understanding that I am here, and in doing this you must pardon me if I say something which has been said before.

The principles underlying Civil Service Reform are as clearly demonstrable as in any political economy. They start from the same axioms of self-interest, which, while not the sole motives of human action, are still apt to play the leading part. Just as men will buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest (and from this starting point so much of political economy takes its rise), just so it is a necessary consequence of the spoils system that men and parties in the distribution of offices will pay the highest price for support of the greatest political value. As commercial value is measured by

dollars, so political value is measured by votes. The rules of political economy have many exceptions. In experience the "parallax and refraction" (if I may so term them) of the special surroundings make the actual result somewhat different in every case from the theoretical result. Personal preferences, as well as ignorance of surrounding conditions, make it perhaps untrue in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred that men actually buy in the very cheapest market and sell in the dearest. But this law is, nevertheless, the law of all trade. So it is true in the market of politics, which the spoils system represents, that the vote value of every appointment is the normal standard toward which every appointment gravitates. Personal or special considerations may control, just as friendship may lead a man to trade at a neighbor's store and pay a little higher price for what he buys. Men have mistaken notions of the political value of a claimant for office, just as they have mistaken notions of the commercial value of the goods they buy. But the laws of trade and of spoils politics are essentially the same.

In earlier days we acted upon the theory of personal discretion in the selection of officeholders. The President was supposed to have some knowledge of the postmasters and collectors whose names were submitted to the Senate; and, when postmasters and collectors were few, this theory was not unreasonable. In the early days of the steam-engine the valve was turned on by the personal action of the engineer; but, as the machinery became more highly developed and complicated, automatic action was found to be necessary. So has it been in our Government. When the number of postmasters increased to 40,000, personal selection was no longer possible. These things must now be done by system. What shall the system be?

The development of the spoils system in American politics has been attributed to Andrew Jackson, to Martin Van Buren, to Aaron Burr. It is not due to any man. If Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren and Aaron Burr had never lived, it would still have been

engrafted, at some time or other, in some form or other, into American institutions, in the absence of some other definite system established by law. So long as appointments were left to the personal discretion of an officer selected by universal suffrage the spoils system was a necessary result. The vote value of the man could not be disregarded when he sought office from those whom he had helped to power. But, just so surely as the spoils system was the product of natural law, just so certain is it to-day that its abolition is a necessity, born from the evils which it inflicts.

No one will deny that party government is a necessary phase of popular government. The men who think alike must vote together and the strife against those who entertain opposite opinions develops efficient organization. Party government in the political world exercises much the same function that competition does in the commercial world, that war does in the physical world, and that the struggle for existence does in the organic world. It is part of the great development of nature through the survival of the strongest and the fittest. Where all men vote, the strongest must conquer at the ballot box by essentially the same rules that armies conquer in war. The temptation is powerful to use all means, lawful and unlawful, according to the Decalogue and the Golden Rule, or against them, to defeat the enemy. In earlier times and among the lower types of humanity the love of booty was a powerful motive with the man of war. The right to despoil his enemy was never questioned. But it has gradually dawned upon the consciousness of the civilized world that this right to plunder not only inflicts unnecessary hardship upon the conquered, but that it is the greatest weakness of the conquering army.

The analogy between the spoils of war and the spoils of office goes far. In the division of booty among chiefs and men, the share of each was determined by the war value of the man. The chief was to have one-fifth or one-tenth of the whole, then came the greater warriors, while the common men must content themselves with

but little. So in politics, the place to which a man is entitled depends upon his political value. The man who raises a small campaign fund gets a small place, while the man who raises his tens or hundreds of thousands may hope for a seat in the Cabinet or a foreign mission. The small speaker of the country district or the editor of the country paper may aspire to a postoffice. But the leader whom all flock to hear, or the head of the great metropolitan daily, may become premier or ambassador. The question which, after all, determines the relation between the office and the man is, How many votes is he worth?

Under such a system the ability of the man to discharge the duties of his office have very little consideration except where these duties are political. Indeed, the particular kind of politician whose vote value is most easily determined is often the one who is disqualified for responsible office. The venal spoilsman can more directly show the particular votes which he has acquired by purchase than the man who simply instructs the public conscience. Hence, if scandal can be avoided, he will be pat to secure the better place.

And offices are given as spoils not only for work done for the party in the campaign, but for services rendered to a faction within the party, or to some particular candidate, in primary, caucus and convention. Indeed, it is here that the worst features of the spoils system are manifest. The old factional fights in the New York Custom House and Congressional Conventions, everywhere packed with officeholders in the interest of particular candidates, are illustrations familiar to all. A few votes in the convention which makes the nomination are more important than a vast number of votes at the popular election. Hence we find that the support of delegates is especially sought for by candidates, and great numbers of those who have thrown their influence for the nominee are to be found among the successful aspirants for office.

The Postmaster-General has spoken of the evils of the spoils system in his recent report. He says:

“For more than one generation the American people have been trained to regard the postoffices as inseparable from the varying fortunes of the two great political parties, and in some instances, even, as legitimately following the vicissitudes of mere factions within a party. . . .

“It is scarcely necessary to add that, as long as this association continues, the Postmaster-General will be compelled to give up the larger part of his time and attention to the settlement of controversies about appointments, to the exclusion of all other business. Improvements in administrative methods, investigation of abuses, economy of expenditure—everything, in short, of permanent advantage to the public—must give way to this one absorbing but temporary interest, the selection of some tens of thousands of appointees from among some scores of thousands of candidates. If an appointment when finally made were to last during the good behavior of the appointee, the time spent in making the choice would not seem so nearly wasted. But, under the practice to which long usage has given somewhat the force of an unwritten law, the process is unending. The same weary round must be trod through the four years of the next, and so on through an infinite succession of Administrations.

“No head of a private business need to be told how damaging to management and discipline such distractions are; and the Postal service must either be taken out of the political field altogether and surrounded with the same conditions which conduce to the health of a private business, or be divided, for administrative purposes, into two sections, the one political and the other non-political, each under a separate head, so that the executive authority on the non-political side shall not be required to divert his mind from the great business questions before him, and the head of the political side shall not be required to give any of his thought to the improvement of the postal system. There is little doubt that, if resort should ever be had to this alternative, the obvious expensiveness of a system in which politics

were openly treated as an essential factor would speedily settle its fate with the people; yet the plan here suggested is not a whit more extravagant than the practice followed to-day, which reaches the same end by indirection, the Postal service losing the benefit of many improvements which a Postmaster-General would be able to map out and execute if he were given a reasonable opportunity to devote his attention to the strictly business functions of his office."

So much for the evil—now for the remedy.

It was on account of discretionary appointments that the spoils system crept in. To abolish the spoils system, appointments must cease to be discretionary.

Our experience in constitutional restrictions shows that the evils of government are always least where its powers are limited by certain fixed laws; that it is wiser to trust our rights to general preëstablished rules than to leave them to be determined by the irresponsible will of any man. Accordingly, in general matters of law we leave as little discretion as possible to our judges, our governors and our political officials. We consider that fixed rules, however imperfect, are better than arbitrary power. Even the hands of our legislators are tied by many stringent provisions of our State and national Constitutions. They cannot impair the obligations of contract nor pass *ex post facto* laws. They cannot establish a religion, nor create an order of nobility. Why is this? Because it is deemed safer to trust a general rule in these matters than to leave them to be determined by their arbitrary will.

The great feature of all republican institutions is jealousy of official power. We have eliminated it from many parts of our system. What the Civil Service Reformer asks is that still other limitations should be prescribed. Why is it that an appointing officer should be permitted to act any more arbitrarily in his appointments than in respect to any other official act?

If now it be conceded that a system of rules is better than individual discretion, the next question is, What sort of rules must they be? It is self-evident that the



right of appointment to office is a trust ; that the duty is to appoint the man best qualified for the office. If these conclusions are correct the only remaining question is, By what system of general rules can the fitness of men for office be best determined ?

Now, no man should fill any office unless he knows enough to perform the duties. This knowledge can be found out in two ways : first, by examining him ; and, second, by trying him. A man ought not to be a reading clerk who cannot read distinctly, nor an engrossing clerk who cannot write a fair hand and spell properly ; yet I have known reading clerks who could not read and engrossing clerks who could not write. An hour's examination would have exposed these shortcomings. In all matters, then, where there are duties to be performed in which the candidate's fitness can be ascertained by an examination, there ought to be such examination. But this is not enough ; we ought to seek not only a fit man, but the very fittest. You cannot tell who the fittest is until you compare one man with another. Examinations should therefore be competitive. Now, the larger the competition the better will be the ability secured. To find out who is the very best, you must give all a chance. This is nothing but simple justice. Every citizen ought to have the right to prove himself the fittest, if he can. Neither wealth, nor birth, nor influence, nor political opinion should shut the door on him, and say : You cannot enter.

But it is not enough that the applicant should be examined—he may know his duties, and fail to perform them—he must also be tried. If he be found unworthy, let him stand aside and give place to the next upon the list. A period of probation should be imposed, and no officer should receive a permanent appointment until his superior certifies to his proper conduct in the discharge of his duties. There should also be proof of moral character and limitations as to age and health. When these safeguards are thrown around the service and promotions are made to depend solely upon the faithful performance of duty, we have, I think, as good a system

as can be devised. We apply to government the great law which Nature applies in every gradation of organic life—the survival of the fittest. The direct result of the competitive system is the appointment of a much better class of public servants, but its indirect results are still more important. It gives a new impulse to a thorough education in the elementary branches required for the public service, and indirectly to education of every description. The opening of the Civil Service to competition is a more powerful stimulus to education than the establishment of a thousand scholarships. But the most important gain is the removal of one of the main causes of the political corruption which now infects our institutions. The offices at the disposal of party managers constitute a great mass of political capital wherewith to bribe men to perform the baser and more dishonorable party services. It is the glittering prize of some office held before the eyes of the ward politician which animates him in his political bartering. To put these offices beyond the power of patronage, to render them unattainable by such means, is to wipe out much of the corruption which pervades our political organizations.

Civil Service Reform is not only logical in theory, it has been justified by abundant experience. It used to be said that its advocates were visionaries and dreamers. The fact that the merit system had already been in successful operation elsewhere made no difference. The American politician had never seen competitive examination applied to public office, and everything beyond the range of his physical vision was an impractical fancy.

Charles Lamb tells us in his inimitable "Dissertation on Roast Pig" of the belief long prevalent in China that this delicate morsel could only be obtained by burning down a house. That was the way pigs had been roasted and that was the way to do it. So to the old-fashioned American politician the morsel of a post-office or a place in one of the Departments was only to be obtained by "standing in" with the Congressman

and "whooping up" the boys at the convention. But at last, says Mr. Lamb, a sage arose in the Celestial Empire, who taught the people that it was not necessary to consume a dwelling in order to roast a pig, and in a few centuries the gridiron and the turnspit came into use. So, too, American statesmanship is learning by practical experience that it is not necessary to turn the Departments and Congress and the people topsy-turvy every four years to fill mere business offices with business men. The classified system has come into use, and it has come to stay.

The two most conspicuous instances of the benefits of the reform are to be found in the classified federal service and that of the State of Massachusetts. Chief Examiner Webster of the United States Commission testified last summer before the committee of the New York Senate in regard to these results of the merit system. The classified service at that time, he said, comprised 43,535 places, three times as many as when the Civil Service Act was passed in 1883. At the beginning a considerable number of places were subject to mere pass examinations, no competition being required, but the Commission found that a better class of employees could be secured where the examinations were competitive and thrown open to all. The relative number of excepted places had been greatly reduced. As the beneficial results of this classified system became known it had been extended to many branches of the service not previously embraced in it, among the most important being the Railway Mail Service and all free-delivery post-offices.

The opponents of the Reform used to insist that if examinations were required the service would be filled by the graduates of academies, colleges and universities, but experience has shown that between 80 and 90 per cent of those who have obtained positions have been educated in the common schools only. It was insisted that moral character and executive ability could not be tested by examinations. Although no system can be devised which will give perfect security in regard to these

qualifications, yet experience has shown that a smaller percentage of those appointed through competitive examination have turned out dishonest or incompetent than among those appointed under the old system by personal selection. Very few persons appointed through the Commission in the Departments at Washington, since 1883, have been dismissed for dishonesty.

And more definite even than the testimony of Mr. Webster is the report of the Postmaster-General in regard to the increased efficiency in the Railway Mail Service since its classification. This was a branch of the service which had reached a high state of development even under the old system. The men were perhaps better trained and more skillful than in any other public appointment requiring an equal number of persons. The Postmaster-General says: "A single illustration will serve as a demonstration of the value of Civil Service protection. In the year 1889, after the Railway Mail Service had been looted for political purposes, the record of correct routings to one error, which had been in the previous year 3,694 to 1, at once fell to 2,834 to 1. The service then came under the protection of the Civil Service Law and its efficiency gradually rose until for 1893 the record was 7,144 to 1, and now for the year 1894 it has reached 7,831 to 1. This record is unprecedented in the history of the service and renders comment upon the effect of the Civil Service Law upon it unnecessary."

There is another reliable test of efficiency, and that is the number of changes in the service.

The Civil Service Commission made an investigation upon this subject and found that the removals in the classified service every four years were about twenty per cent of the whole number and in the unclassified service about eighty per cent.

In the places which are still filled for political reasons, one thing is therefore very evident: either that a great many bad men entered the service whom it is necessary to remove, or that a great many good men are unjustly removed without cause.

So excellent are the results of this system, that each new Administration makes considerable extension to the classified service. On the 2d of November last, President Cleveland included all custom-houses having as many as twenty employees, messengers and watchmen in the Departments, clerks of postoffice inspectors, several chiefs of divisions in the Department of Agriculture, and a large number of the places which had been excepted from examination in the postoffices and in the customs service.

The happy results of this Reform are shown just as clearly by the experience of Massachusetts. Here the competitive system has been gradually extended until it embraces nearly all subordinate administrative places in the commonwealth. And in Boston and other large cities, even laborers are registered and receive employment according to systematic regulations which admit of no partiality or political influence.

The results in the city of Brooklyn are equally satisfactory. Here the competitive system has been extended so as to embrace mechanics, who are examined in regard to the use of their tools and the knowledge of their trade. Oral examinations, with stenographic reports, are relied upon, and there are instances where mechanics unable to read or write have passed well and secured good positions. The merit system in Brooklyn has secured admirable order in every department and a material saving in the cost of government.

It used to be contended that questions were asked calling for scholastic requirements, knowledge of foreign languages, ancient history, and all sorts of irrelevant things. These claims, however, whenever they have come to the attention of the federal Civil Service Commission, have been silenced by a challenge to point out a single question upon any examination paper which did not refer to the duties to be performed by the man who was to be examined. Such instances at the present time cannot be furnished. The examinations are in every case wholly practicable and have reference to nothing else than the qualifications of the applicant to perform his official duties.

The only conspicuous instances in which the merit system has apparently failed to accomplish the best results have been in the State and city of New York. Reasons for this were very clearly shown in the examination before the Senate Committee. The number of places for which competitive examinations were required were constantly reduced and the number of excepted places was constantly increased, until on July 1 the excepted places were 510, the non-competitive 1,887, while the competitive were reduced to 429. This is not Civil Service Reform, it is the spoils system.

Positions were transferred by wholesale from the competitive to the non-competitive list. The detailed history of the degradation of the State system was told by the former examiners and the present commissioners. Under the blighting administrations of Governor Hill and Governor Flower it was shown that whenever any commission had commenced to work toward the proper enforcement of the law, it was at once dismissed. Complete suspension of the rules was directed in several cases and political applicants were exempted from examination, until only 12½ per cent of the entire places in the State were retained in the competitive list. Similar causes in the city of New York have led to similar results.

The people of that State, in their recent election, showed very plainly that they understood that the cause of the failure was not in the law or the system, but in the unworthy men who had nullified it.

No man was a better judge of the difference between the new system and the old than Mr. Windom, late Secretary of the Treasury. He had been in the Cabinet both before and after the classification of the Civil Service and he declared emphatically that a return to the old practice in the Departments at Washington would be followed by the most disastrous results.

At the side of every channel of national life stands some Scylla or Charybdis, pregnant with danger. Sometimes it threatens visibly, sometimes it lurks unseen beneath the waves. It may come from the lawlessness

of lusty youth or from the crystallization of political old age. It may be danger of foreign encroachment and the need of vast armaments, draining the resources of the people, or it may be slavery, intolerance or domestic corruption.

Our own Republic has no immunity. If there be one thing more to be feared to-day than any other it is the gradual deterioration of patriotism from the intrusion of special and selfish interests in our public affairs. The love of money and the lust of power have been fraught with disasters not less formidable than the sword of the enemy. We may preach unselfishness and remind each other of our civic duties, but we cannot change the nature of man, and the words of prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," are quite as applicable to the political as to the spiritual world.

The purpose of Civil Service Reform is to remove from our midst the temptations begotten by the love of office. When that shall be done we shall have another assurance of the continued integrity and purity of our national life.

## THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL SERVICE REFORM.

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BY RICHARD HENRY DANA.

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Not many years ago both New York and Boston were at the same time reforming their methods of electing their respective boards of aldermen. In one of the cities the aldermen had previously been elected at large, and in the other by districts. Each city, under the lead of eminent Reformers, and in high hopes of improvement, adopted the very plan abandoned by the other. These hopes were frustrated. The boards of aldermen in each city remained of about the same stamp as before. The two cities had played stage-coach, but they found out that having changed chairs did not make the locks on their front doors any more secure.

An effort is now being made to centralize power and responsibility as a measure of municipal reform, a measure I believe in ; but if we leave it there, we accomplish but little. The policy of centralized power has worked so badly before that the past generation adopted the plan of checks and limitations. To return to the one-man power with no other change is but to return to that which confessedly worked badly. Biennial legislatures and longer terms of office for Mayors and Governors have not of themselves given the relief that was expected. A reform is now being agitated for the election of United States Senators by the people instead of by the Legislatures of the States. There may be some good in the change, but let us not forget that the bosses can quite as well control the State conventions in the future as they have the State legislatures in the past. We will be brought only to the familiar old dilemma of a choice between two bosses ; one who attaches himself



to our political principles, and another equally bad who parades under the banners with opposing mottoes. New York City has driven out Tammany and New York State has closed the door on Hill; but what if the key is still left hanging on the outside of the door? How long will it be before they or others like them will again be comfortably ensconced within? Is there any tariff reformer who for a moment doubts that it was the work of the spoils-men of the Democratic party that delayed the passage of and ultimately emasculated a reform measure in Congress?

No great statesmanship can overlook the motives of men, and the deep and lasting reforms are such as so changed the conditions as to remove the harmful desires. In the last analysis is it not true that the powers for evil in our Government against which we have had to contend, rest on the desire for Government employment? In the philosophy of government is it not true that the power of a despot lies in his control of the patronage? The Czar of Russia could do little had he not power over appointments and removals in the army, the navy, the judiciary and the Civil Service, including the police, and if the nobles did not realize that their titles and privileges depended upon the existence of the throne. But for this, the power of the Czar would be as small as that of the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire at the time when Francis II of Hapsburg gave up his empty title. Did the Czar not control the salaries and positions of thousands, who would there be to execute the cruel edict of flogging, imprisonment, exile and death? The unrestricted power of patronage then is the power of despotism, and until patronage is removed from among us despotism in substance, though not in form, will still exist.

This is nothing new; everyone here has long been aware of the principle; yet, after all, is it not one of those truths which, though few will deny, yet few will apply? Our fellow citizens are amazed at the absoluteness of the bosses' power, and yet they continue to furnish them with the very means of executing their absolute will. Is it not time that we should clearly see that

no other reform will be of much avail till we have abolished the patronage of offices?

After we have done this there will still be need of work. There is no automatic, perpetual motion machinery of government. Vigilance will still be the price of our liberties, but there is a considerable difference between the amount of vigilance required with a strong lock on the door and the key in our own possession, and having the key hung on the outside of the door leading to the street. There is some difference between being able to get a fair night's rest, and having to stand watch day and night with a gun leveled ready to shoot the first person who takes the key and enters the door. Human nature would not stand the latter very long. House-keeping under such circumstances is not worth the house kept. If, then, patronage is the key by which the thieves get inside, it seems clear—and nothing could be clearer—that we should remove the key from their reach, and yet people are agitating for all sorts of schemes of painting the door a new color or changing the name of the street, and saying that it is impracticable to remove the key from the outside of the door, or are so afraid of being called impracticable that they still leave the key where the thieves and tramps can easily reach it. It will not do either simply to tie some tag to the key, saying that there is a law, and by that law the key should be inside, and yet leave it hanging within easy reach from the street. The patronage system must be abolished, and thoroughly abolished, or we will forever be required to pay such an amount of vigilance for our liberties as will reduce us to slavery. We must have some time for our private and other political duties.

If we as a nation should recognize that Civil Service Reform is no fad, but the profoundest and the most important and the most durable of reforms, it would be quickly accomplished, and when once accomplished, all other desirable changes will be brought about the easier, and by public agents closer and more responsible to the people, with more time free for attention to legislation and more capable and upright of themselves.

## THE ANTI-SPOILS LEAGUE—ITS ORIGIN AND GROWTH.

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BY WILLIAM POTTS.

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The Anti-Spoils League originated in the latter part of the year 1893, in a suggestion made by Mr. Richard Watson Gilder, the editor of the *Century Magazine* and a member of the Executive Committee of the New York Civil Service Reform Association. The several Civil Service Reform Associations throughout the country generally required the payment of dues and the performance of some specific work by their members. Through the Anti-Spoils League it was proposed to enlist in the movement for improved methods in government all those voters who were willing to stand up and be counted as in favor of the destruction of the spoils system. It was proposed to unite these in a new abolition movement—a movement to abolish boss rule and to establish in its place the merit system, the system which decrees the tools to those that can handle them, and as long as they handle them well.

It was not proposed to make obligatory upon the members of the organization any expenditure of money or of time, although it was of course hoped and indeed deemed certain that many of those who would unite in it would volunteer such assistance. It was expected rather to elicit the latent sentiment of the country in favor of a better and safer system of equipping the public service, and to keep such sentiment alive and fertile in results when it had been fully awakened. That it might not be cumbered by machinery, the management of the League was placed in the hands of the Executive Committee of the National Civil Service Reform

League, and the officers of this organization were made likewise the officers of the Anti-Spoils League. The headquarters of the new organization were established in the office of the National Civil Service Reform League in New York City, and the necessary labor was to be performed by the ordinary clerical force in that office. The expenses were to be defrayed wholly by voluntary contributions, the circumstances, however, as in all similar movements, calling for much voluntary service.

An announcement of the new movement was made in the latter part of December, 1893, and gratifying notices of it were printed in the periodical press in all parts of the country, monthlies, weeklies and dailies uniting in giving it a hearty welcome. Especially gratifying to its managers was the reception accorded to it in the South, where, for various reasons, the Civil Service Reform movement had hitherto made little organized progress, notwithstanding the fact that for some years a growing interest in it had been shown there, largely as a result of the wise action of the United States Civil Service Commission, which had succeeded in fully demonstrating the catholic, non-partisan and patriotic character of its purpose and methods.

Something less than a year has elapsed since the new venture was launched, and much of the larger part of the work which has been done in connection with it, was performed within the first three or four months. During the greater part of the year the conditions have not been such as to encourage extended efforts in any such field. The public mind was otherwise occupied. The conditions have now widely changed, however, and a profitable renewal of the movement is about to be made.

The total number of members enrolled in the League up to this date is 9,324, and it is represented in all the States and Territories of the Union, excepting Nevada, Wyoming and Arizona. The number on the roll from the various States and Territories represented ranges between 2,687 in Massachusetts, (New York following next with 2,219), and 1 in Mississippi. The membership includes all sorts and conditions of men.

Especially noteworthy and important is the interest which has been shown in educational institutions, especially in the leading universities and colleges. This has been so considerable in some instances as to have led already to the formation of strong and active Civil Service Reform Associations at Harvard, Williams and Cornell, and others are in contemplation at Princeton, the University of Pennsylvania and elsewhere.

Outside of institutions of this character, the formation of active Civil Service Reform Associations has also been promoted. An organization has been fully effected in Washington, where the presence and services of another association will be invaluable, and others are in process of incubation in Louisville, in Nashville, in St. Paul and elsewhere.

The total amount subscribed to this date for the purposes of the League is \$1,032, and the expenditures have aggregated \$999.20, leaving a present balance in the treasury of \$32.80. Of course it would not have been possible to make such a showing as this, had not the work been performed in the manner proposed, under the auspices of the National Civil Service Reform League. The resources of the latter organization, however, are limited, and in view of the fact that channels are always open for the extension of the educational work of both bodies, it is much to be desired that they should each be placed upon a liberal financial basis.

**CONSTITUTION**  
**OF THE**  
**National Civil-Service Reform League.**

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**I.**

The name of this organization shall be the National Civil Service Reform League.

**II.**

The object of the National Civil Service Reform League shall be to promote the purposes and to facilitate the correspondence and the united action of the Civil Service Reform Associations.

**III.**

The League shall consist of all the Civil Service Reform Associations in the United States which signify their willingness to become members thereof. Any association hereafter expressing such willingness shall become a member of the League upon its being accepted as such by the League or the Executive Committee. Any member of any such association may be present at any meeting of the League and take part in the debates or discussions as the by-laws may provide.

**IV.**

At any meeting of the League, each association belonging to it shall be entitled to one vote upon every question coming before the League; such vote may be cast by a personal representative designated by each association, or by proxy, as the by-laws may provide. If no such designation be made the delegates from such association present at such meeting, or a majority of them, may cast the vote of such association.

## V.

The officers of the League shall be a President, Secretary, Treasurer and nine Vice Presidents ; and there shall be a General Committee and an Executive Committee. The officers and the committees shall hold office until their successors are appointed or elected.

## VI.

The President and Vice Presidents shall be elected by ballot at the annual meeting of the League.

The Secretary and Treasurer shall be chosen, and may be removed, by the General Committee.

The General Committee shall be chosen annually, and shall consist of one delegate from each association belonging to the League ; and one additional delegate for every two hundred members, or major fraction thereof, of such association as certified by its secretary. Each association shall elect its own delegates in such manner as it may determine.

The members of the Executive Committee shall be ex-officio members of the General Committee.

Any member of the General Committee may act by proxy.

The General Committee shall keep a record of its proceedings, and shall make a report to the League at the annual meeting. A vacancy in any office, except that of Vice President, may be filled by the General Committee for the remainder of the term.

The General Committee may delegate to the Executive Committee any of its powers ; provided, however, that it may at any time resume the powers so delegated.

The Executive Committee shall consist of nineteen members to be elected annually by the General Committee and shall have power to fix its own quorum. And any member of the Executive Committee may act by proxy.

## VII.

The General Committee may, subject to these articles, manage the affairs of the League, direct and dispose of

the funds, and may, from time to time, make and modify by-laws for the League and for its own action.

No debt shall be contracted, nor shall any appropriation of money be made, by the League or by the General Committee, beyond the amount in the hands of the Treasurer.

### VIII.

There shall be an annual meeting of the League at such time in each year, and at such place as the General Committee may determine, at which officers shall be elected for the ensuing year, and other appropriate business may be transacted.

A meeting of the League may be called at the discretion of the General Committee whenever any association belonging to it notifies the Secretary of the League of its desire to have such meeting, and the President may at any time call a meeting of the League.

### IX.

Any provision of this Constitution may be suspended or amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any meeting of the General Committee, due notice of such proposed suspension or amendment having been given at a previous meeting. Any association belonging to the League may, through its representatives, propose amendments to the Constitution which may be approved under the same conditions.





# PROCEEDINGS

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF

5-41336

## THE NATIONAL CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE

HELD AT

WASHINGTON, D. C., DEC. 12 AND 13, 1895.

WITH THE ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT,

HON. CARL SCHURZ,

AND OTHER MATTERS.

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NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED FOR THE  
NATIONAL CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE.

1895.

**PRESS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT.**

**ANNUAL MEETING**

**OF THE**

**NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE,**

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**DECEMBER 12 AND 13, 1895.**

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Pursuant to call duly issued, the fifteenth annual meeting of the National Civil Service Reform League was held at Washington, D. C., on the 12th and 13th of December, 1895. Among the delegates in attendance during the several sessions were the following :

**BALTIMORE:** Charles J. Bonaparte, M. E. Lyle, Cleveland P. Manning, Edgar G. Miller, William Reynolds, L. P. Hennighausen, G. W. Sattler, A. P. Shanklin and C. A. E. Spamer.

**BOSTON:** Samuel B Capen, Arthur Hobart, Jonathan A. Lane, Samuel Y. Nash and J. G. Thorp, Jr.

**BROOKLINE:** Dana Estes.

**BROOKLYN:** William G. Low, Truman J. Backus and Edward Cary.

**BUFFALO:** Sherman S. Rogers and Charles B. Wheeler.

CAMBRIDGE: Richard Henry Dana, W. W. Vaughan and Morrill Wyman, Jr.

CINCINNATI: N. H. Davis.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY: C. L. McGovern.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: John W. Douglass, John Joy Edson, Harry English, Charles C. Glover, H. H. Glassie, Geo. Wm. Hill, Rev. Teunis S. Hamlin, Dr. Frank S. Howe, Francis E. Leupp, Tallmadge A. Lambert, Charles Lyman, Rev. Dr. Alex. Mackay-Smith, Henry B. F. MacFarland, Theodore W. Noyes, Charles W. Stetson, Frederick L. Siddons, A. L. Sturtevant, Gen. Ellis Spear, C. C. Snow, Rufus H. Thayer and Adolph G. Wolf.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY: A. S. Ingalls.

HOPKINSVILLE, KY.: James Roaman.

INDIANA: Wm. Dudley Foulke.

NASHVILLE, TENN.: Herman Justi.

NEW YORK: Carl Schurz, Silas W. Burt, Charles Collins, Alfred Bishop Mason, George McAneny, George Haven Putnam, W. J. Schieffelin, Oscar S. Straus, Henry Villard, C. W. Watson and Everett P. Wheeler.

PHILADELPHIA: Herbert Welsh, Charles Chauncey, W. W. Montgomery, Charles Richardson, Edward S. Sayres and R. Francis Wood.

PRINCETON COLLEGE: H. B. Armes, A. G. Lybyer, W. E. Lampe and W. J. Wright.

ROCHESTER: Elbridge L. Adams.

ST. PAUL, MINN.: Charles P. Noyes and A. R. Kiefer.

YALE UNIVERSITY: Lanier McKee.

In response to invitations extended by the League to affiliated societies, delegates were also present from a number of such organizations, as follows:

BOSTON:—*Massachusetts Reform Club*: Andrew Fiske and Samuel Y. Nash.

*Municipal League*: Samuel B. Capen, J. G. Thorp, Jr. and Arthur Hobart.

CAMBRIDGE.—*Library Hall Association*: R. H. Dana, J. G. Thorp, Jr. and Morrill Wyman, Jr.

MARIETTA, O.—*Citizens' Association*: Prof. John C. Shedd.

NEW YORK.—*Council of Confederated Good Government Clubs*: Wm J. Schieffelin and M. D. Rothschild.

*Board of Trade and Transportation*: Oscar S. Straus.

PHILADELPHIA.—*Municipal League*: Charles Richardson and Herbert Welsh.

TROY, N. Y.—*City Club*: Mont G. Curtis.

*Citizens' Association*: Rev. T. P. Sawin.

WASHINGTON.—*Civic Centre*: John M Gregory Rev. Alex. Kent, Charles Lyman, Mrs. Ellen S. Mussey, Miss Josephine Clark, Rev. Dr. S. M. Newman, Edwin Willetts and W. F. Willoughby.

*Board of Trade*: Henry F. Blount, Gardiner G. Hubbard, Myron M. Parker, Simon Wolf, John B. Wright and S. W. Woodward.

The morning session of the 12th, commencing at 10.30 o'clock, was occupied by a joint meeting of the General and Executive Committees, held in the rooms of the Cosmos Club.

At 2.30 o'clock in the afternoon, an open meeting of the League was held at the Cosmos Club, the president in the chair. An address of welcome was made by Hon. Charles R. Ross, president of the Board of District Commissioners, who was introduced by Mr. John Joy Edson, president of the Civil Service Reform Association, of the District of Columbia.\*

The president then withdrew, calling Mr. Sherman S. Rogers to the chair, and the following papers were read:

“The Appointment and Tenure of Postmasters.” Richard Henry Dana.\*

“The Important Function of Civil Service Reform.” F. L. Siddons.†

“Results of Recent Agitation of Consular Service Reform.” Jonathan A. Lane.‡

“Superannuation in the Civil Service.” Wm. Dudley Foulke.§

The annual address of the president, “Congress and the Spoils System,” was delivered at Metzertott’s Hall at 8 o’clock on the evening of the 12th. It is as follows:

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\* Page 51.    † Page 60.    ‡ Page 63.    § Page 76.

## CONGRESS AND THE SPOILS SYSTEM.

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*An Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the National Civil Service Reform League at Washington, D. C., December 12, 1895.*

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BY HON. CARL SCHURZ.

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It is with a feeling of peculiar satisfaction that I greet the fifteenth annual meeting of the national Civil Service Reform League at the seat of the National Government—the place where the necessity of the Reform we advocate has been most conspicuously demonstrated, and where also its most conspicuous and fruitful successes have been achieved.

No intelligent observer who visits Washington from time to time can fail to be struck with the evidences of the constant growth of the national Government in the magnitude and scope of its functions, corresponding to the multiplication of the public and private interests that come into contact with it. From a thin string of agricultural settlements on the Atlantic coast, here and there dotted with small trading towns, this Republic has in a century expanded into a vast empire spanning a continent, excelling in wealth and material power every other nation on the globe. With its growth it has changed its character. Its bucolic stage has long been passed. Its agricultural interests, however great, have lost their former predominance. That great store of rich virgin lands which formerly offered homes and sustenance to the advancing population, has shrunk to petty proportions, and will soon altogether cease to play



an important part in our social development. The expansion of our industrial activities and of our facilities of communication has attracted large masses of humanity to our cities, several of which are already far beyond the million line, while others are pressing hard upon it. According to present appearances the time is not very distant when a majority of the American people will be congregated in towns. Altogether, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that in some important respects we are approaching the social conditions of the old world. It is true, we still observe striking and essential differences, but they are gradually growing less.

Under these circumstances the municipal governments of our large cities are confronted by problems of unaccustomed and constantly increasing magnitude and complexity; and the State and national governments, too, find themselves burdened with new duties and responsibilities which force an enlargement of their functions and their machinery, and more exactly tax their working capacity as well as their wisdom. I do not mean to inquire here whether this expansion of the province of government is desirable or undesirable, but merely to point it out as a fact and to invite attention to some of its consequences.

There are certain propositions so self-evident and so easily understood that it would appear like discourtesy to argue them before persons of intelligence. Such a one it is, that as the functions of government grow in extent, importance and complexity, the necessity grows of their being administered not only with honesty, but also with trained ability and knowledge; and that in the same measure as this necessity is disregarded in a democratic government, the success and the stability of democratic institutions will be impaired. But while every sane man accepts this proposition as self-evident in theory, it may be said that every opponent of Civil Service Reform denies it in practice—and, I regret to add, a good many men deny it in practice who would object to being called opponents of Civil Service Reform.

When I speak of the success and stability of demo-

cratic institutions being imperiled, I do not mean the danger of a sudden, grand and startling collapse, but I mean the danger of a gradual decay of those elements which are essential to their vitality. I have always been a firm believer in the excellence of democratic government—the government, as Abraham Lincoln defined it, of the people, by the people and for the people. It is a government of the people, inasmuch as in the people all sovereignty resides. It is a government by the people, inasmuch as the people make the laws and direct the conduct of public affairs through their servants chosen by them for those objects. It is a government for the people, inasmuch as public offices are instituted and charged with certain functions and endowed with certain powers to be administered solely for the service and benefit of the people, and for no other purpose. These are the vital requirements of democratic government. In the same measure as these requirements fail to be fulfilled—as any element of sovereignty passes away from the people, or as the making of the laws and the conduct of public affairs cease to be controlled by the people's will, or as the administration of the public offices is diverted from the purposes for which they have been instituted—that is to say, as the offices are used to serve ends other than the public benefit, or are entrusted to persons not apt to give to the people the best attainable service—in that measure democratic government fails.

It is said that democratic government is practically government through political parties. This can be true only in a limited sense. If political parties are what they ought to be—organizations of citizens caused by different currents of opinion as to principles of government or certain questions of public policy, and set on foot and put to the work of persuasion for the purpose of making this or that set of opinions prevail in the conduct of public affairs—they serve a legitimate end. But whenever they seek to divert the public offices, instituted solely for the service and benefit of the people, from their true purpose in order to use them for

their own service and benefit, to this extent turning the government *through* political parties into a government *for* political parties, they strike at one of the vital principles of democratic government. And in the same measure as they succeed in this, democratic government fails to be government for the people.

The appearance among us of American men and women who have fallen in love with the splendor of monarchical courts, and who also please themselves by imaginative imitations of aristocratic society, has from time to time called forth ingenious speculation as to whether the great democracy of the American Republic will not eventually be turned into a monarchy. I am convinced that, if there be any such danger at all in store for us, it will not come from such coteries of weak minds and impotent ambitions; but it might arise either from a failure of democratic government to afford the necessary protection to individual rights, to property, to public order and safety, so that society would turn for that protection to a strong man, or from democratic government becoming an instrument of private cupidity and falling into the hands of the chief of an organization looking for plunder.

There has actually been such a monarchy on a small scale in existence among us. I have seen it in operation, and so have many of my hearers. We have witnessed in the greatest city of the United States one man wielding the powers of municipal government like a monarch, in some respects like an absolute monarch, too. Standing at the head of a pretended political organization ruled by him with autocratic power, he made appointments and dismissals in the public service of the city by merely issuing his orders. He determined what candidates for office should within his dominion be submitted to the popular vote, and his followers with prompt obedience enforced his pleasure. He gave audience to citizens having business with the municipal government, and either granted or refused their petitions like a sovereign. He ordered his agents in the Legislature of the State to pass this bill or to defeat the

other bill, and it was done. Citizens became accustomed to approach him as supplicants approach a king. Aside from the public taxes for his municipal government he levied a separate revenue, the payment of which could not be refused without danger—a sort of civil list, partly under the euphonious title of “campaign funds,” partly without any euphony—for the use of which he never thought of accounting. He grew rich in a marvelously short time, and when a popular uprising against his rule broke out which threatened to become too formidable to resist, he abdicated and withdrew to his estates.

This was monarchy—not, indeed, a monarchy surrounded by the pomp of a court of nobles with ancient names, escutcheons and gold lace, and ribbons and stars and crosses—rather a very vulgar sort of monarchy whose vassals and high dignitaries were a Mayor and police commissioners and heads of municipal departments and district leaders and ward politicians with names and antecedents and manners and social standing anything but aristocratic—but a monarchy for all that, with most of the essential attributes. To be sure the title of this monarch was not that of king, but that of “Boss”—but a boss clad with regal power which he exercised with arbitrary authority until, like some French kings, he had to yield to a popular upheaval amounting to a revolution. Such things happened, as everyone acquainted with the history of Tammany Hall knows, in this very Republic; and if we speculate upon the manner in which monarchy—not in name but in fact—may rise up among us, here is the living example.

The development of political bossism into something like actual monarchy is, to be sure, an extreme case. But all political bossism has a tendency in that direction. When in a political party the selfish element obtains controlling influence it will, for mutual benefit, naturally seek to organize itself into what we call a machine; and machine rule will usually, for the more certain attainment of its selfish ends through united and well regulated action, drift into more or less irrespon-

sible one-man rule—the one man to rule the machine for its and his benefit, to rule through the machine the party organization, and to rule through the party organization, as the case may be, the municipality or the State. And this rule he does not exercise by bringing his fellow-citizens, through persuasion, to his own way of thinking, if indeed he have any, with regard to principles or politics, or measures touching the public interest, but by distributing among the selfish politicians composing his organized corps of mercenaries, in the true feudal fashion, as rewards for services rendered, or as inducements for services to be rendered, things of value, such as public offices with their emoluments and opportunities, which things of value do not belong to him but to the public—he doling them out among his henchmen, not for the benefit of the public but for his and their own.

How far the aspirations of bossism, thus established, are already reaching, found recently a curious illustration in the newspaper report that some of the State bosses, not content with their local autocracy, met together in conference to agree upon certain persons to be put forward as candidates for the Presidency of the United States—just as in the old times of the German Empire the princes wearing the high dignity and power of “Electors” met together to agree upon a selection for the imperial crown. Equally striking was another piece of news going through the press, that when the boss of one State was hard pressed in an election by an uprising of citizens impudently wishing to govern themselves, the boss of another State, although not of the same party, but inspired by a feeling of common interest and of comradeship, sent a strong troop of his own experienced and fearless repeaters to aid the struggling brother boss at the polls—just as the Czar of Russia in 1849, when the Emperor of Austria was in danger from the Hungarian revolutionists, sent his hard pressed brother-Emperor a Russian army to help him subdue the insurgent subjects and save the monarchical authority. Even if these stories had been wholly in-

vented by newspaper reporters, it would be a significant sign of the times that they were generally believed as entirely natural occurrences. And as to their naturalness, given the premises, there can be no doubt.

Do you ask how such utterly undemocratic developments can become possible in a Republic like ours? Simply by the existence of the spoils system, which allows that which belongs to the public, especially the public offices, to be diverted from public to private use. Without that system, political bossism, in the form at least in which we know it, would not be possible. With that system and all its demoralizing influences kept alive in our politics, bossism will not only continue to exist in spite of occasional reverses, but it will propagate itself from State to State and bring forth results which, if predicted now, would severely tax popular credulity. Fortunately, with an intelligent and vigorous people like ours, the growth and recognition of such an evil usually bring with them the recognition of the remedy. As the spoils system evolved its most characteristic and most undemocratic products, the machine and the boss, to more and more conspicuous power, and the corrupt, rapacious and debasing tyranny of that power was more and more widely felt, the people in constantly widening circles turned with a just instinct to the true corrective. It is a remarkable fact that Civil Service Reform, which twenty years ago struggled, apparently in vain, to win the favorable attention of the great mass of citizens, has of late years marvelously risen in popular interest. The reason is that the popular intellect, stimulated by disgust with existing abuses and by apprehension of worse things to come, began to see in Civil Service Reform the only effective method to destroy the spoils system which was robbing, oppressing and degrading them—that is, the only effective method to restore the public offices to the service of the public ends for which they were originally instituted, and make the government in this sense once more what it was designed to be, a government, not for the benefit of the politicians, or of machines,

or of political parties, but a government for the people.

Then the popular mind also readily appreciated the practical benefit conferred upon every branch of the public service in which the merit system, the essential feature of Civil Service Reform, has been introduced and faithfully enforced. And every day the popular demand grows more general and more energetic for its extension over wider fields. The merit system has stood the test of practical experience so triumphantly that the vociferous objections and revilings of it, in which the spoils politicians used to delight, have sunk to a mournful mutter. That awful spectre of an overbearing, office-holding aristocracy consisting of Department clerks, revenue collectors and custom-house weighers has ceased to haunt our nights. The dire prediction that only college-bred men could, under the competitive examination system, become Government scribes, has withered in the frost of statistical showings. And the harrowing fable that candidates for letter-carriers' places are examined on the exact distance between the moon and the planet Mars has gone to sleep forever. All these and similar fictions are drowned by the declarations of one Department chief after another that they cannot understand how without the merit system the business of their offices could ever have been carried on ; by the contentment of public servants working under Civil Service Rules, that at last they have escaped the debasing dependence on political favor and may be proudly conscious of standing on their merits ; by the popular call for further extension of the system, such as the emphatic demand of the merchants that the consular service be put under Civil Service Rules ; by the grateful satisfaction of the inhabitants of our large cities as the Reform gradually takes root in the different branches of municipal administration ; by the sentiment rapidly spreading among all classes of our people that our political contests must cease to be scrambles for spoils and plunder.

Thus Civil Service Reform has no longer to struggle for its right of existence. So much is triumphantly es-

established. The problem remains how to secure, by further conquest, what we have won; for the results the Reform movement has achieved will not be entirely safe until its success is complete—until the spoils system is *totally* abolished, and the new order of things has supplanted it in the ordinary ways of thinking and the political habits of the people.

We all know that, as we owe to our legislative bodies the enactment of the existing Civil Service Laws, so it is in the legislative bodies that the most dangerous attempts are made to circumvent or subvert them. At the same time, whatever the Executive power may do in the way of extending the Reform, the aid of legislation is required to give it endurance and security. Now I must confess that of all those who are charged with public duties, the legislator, especially the member of Congress, seems to me by far the most interested in the total abolition of the patronage system. He should desire that abolition all the more ardently, as the growth of our Government and the swelling magnitude and complexity of the problems before the legislator demand the devotion of all his mental and moral faculties with constantly increasing severity for his real duties, and more and more sternly forbid any dissipation of them in unworthy employments. Permit me to discuss this branch of my subject somewhat elaborately. I shall not argue the constitutional aspect of the interference of members of Congress with the appointing power, but unfold the possibilities developed by existing custom; and in doing so, I speak to some extent from the personal experience gathered during six years' service in Congress and four years in an executive position which kept me in constant official and personal contact with Senators and Representatives.

Let us picture to ourselves a candidate for Congress in a large district and follow him in his career—a man of good character, fine abilities, and with an honorable ambition to serve his country. It is the year of a Presidential election, with a new deal of patronage in prospect. First, he has to get the nomination from his



party convention. He enjoys the good will and respect of his neighbors, but he finds that this is not enough. The primaries which elect delegates to the Congressional district convention are in many cases controlled by the most adroit and pushing politicians, who want office and are especially keen when a change of administration is impending. Our candidate finds that to beat his rivals for the nomination he will need the aid of some of those alert politicians, and, in turn, they let him know what places he is to procure for them if elected. The candidate being once started, and, of course, anxious to succeed, tries to persuade himself that such things are always done, and that there is really no harm in opening a prospective reward to persons willing to render the country the valuable service of making him a member of Congress. Still he recoils from the thought of making a downright bargain for his nomination. Morally he cannot afford to purchase his nomination with a promise of office. Neither can he afford, he thinks, to lose his nomination by bluntly refusing the promise. He begins to compromise with his conscience and honor, and calls up his diplomatic adroitness, answering the demand for office in ambiguous phrase: he will "take the matter into favorable consideration"; he will "do the fair thing"; he smiles, he winks, he nods, having not yet learned by experience that all these things are taken by the place-hunter as positive promise, no matter what his own mental reservations may be. And thus he is, without knowing it, soon deeply mortgaged, having, perhaps, in this vague way promised the same office to several people; and such promises are sure to be presented for redemption.

Well, he is nominated, and now the campaign begins. The district threatens to be close, and he looks for help. That help is freely offered. Some men take a sincere interest in the cause the candidate stands for, and give him their aid unselfishly. Others, who are effective local stump speakers, or whose influence can reach some particular class of people, or who can disarm certain opposition by personal work, or who are just the men to

get out the vote, or who can do great good by the wise expenditure of some money, and so on, are of opinion that they should not be expected to "hustle about" for nothing. He accepts their services, and this gives them "claims" upon him—claims to be satisfied, of course, with offices. Carried away by the heat of the struggle he not merely continues to open prospects by vague speech and to smile and wink and nod, but he makes positive pledges, perhaps not a few of them. The mortgages rise to a formidable amount.

The election comes and he triumphs. His bosom swells with the proud consciousness of honors won and of distinction to be achieved in the service of his country. Being a man of honorable purpose he thinks of going to work at once to prepare himself for his legislative duties, the importance of which he earnestly appreciates. To these duties he wishes wholly to devote himself. But no; he has not yet time for that. Other more pressing business intervenes. His mail is heavy with petitions and recommendations for office, bearing long strings of names in favor of men of whom he may never have heard—covering all the federal appointments in his district many times over. Estimable men whom he cannot afford to offend seek places for their friends and dependents. But by the men who have "claims" upon him he is most strongly reminded that first of all his time and labor belong to his "friends." There will be a change of administration and, of course, vacant places without limit. In the first place it is to be taken for granted that, according to custom, he will have all the postoffices in his district at his disposal. Then it is suggested that he should consider it a duty of honor to fill some consulships from his district, if not even a foreign mission. And indeed there are gentlemen among his constituents who, having done valiant battle for him, now think that foreign air would do good to them and their wives, and that their daughters should have first-class music lessons abroad. Then there are others who maintain that they have fairly earned Indian agencies, or revenue positions, or places

as chiefs of bureaus or at least of divisions in some Department at Washington. They and their friends all insist that the new member of Congress is in honor bound to procure them these things, that he certainly can do it if he will, that it will cost him only a word, and that if he fails to do it, his party in the district will suffer grievously, and he himself in particular.

About the time the new President goes into power our new Congressman, loaded with petitions and recommendations, rushes on to Washington to plunge into that fearful spoils-carnival called a change of administration. He travels in lively company, not a few of his constituents who hold, or believe they hold, his promises go with him to keep him to his work, each expecting him to make *his* case a special one. The poor man's first night in Washington is troubled with disquieting visions. Has he not seen among his traveling company Smith, to whom he during the campaign opened a prospect for the postmastership at Blankville, while he had positively promised that postmastership to Jones? And here they are both in bodily presence, each anxious to close the final mortgage each holds on the same piece of property.

Our new member of Congress has always considered himself a man of integrity and honor. He now instinctively feels that he is in a situation in which a gentleman ought not to be. Has he not done a thing which a gentleman ought not to do? It is often the case that we become for the first time clearly conscious of the true nature of an offence when we have to confront its consequences. But our friend has hardly time for self-reproach. How can he get rid of the conflict of claims between Smith and Jones? Both are influential constituents whom it would be dangerous to offend. Smith is perhaps the better man for that postoffice, but Jones holds the clearer promise. Our friend concludes that the clearer promise must be kept; that he will explain his embarrassment to Smith, ask Smith to give way to Jones, and tell Smith that he shall have "something equally as good," as the current phrase is. Ah, poor man, he has to learn yet what a terrible scourge he has prepared for

his back by that promise of "something equally as good," for Smith will faithfully stay by his side until he gets it.

And a good many other expectant constituents will stay likewise. Wherever our unfortunate statesman is, they are. They are there when he goes to bed late at night, they are there before he gets up in the morning. There are the Joneses calling for their postoffices, the Smiths demanding "something equally as good," and many others "claiming" many other things—and all these things without delay. Our friend, his political creditors at his heels, rushes first to the general Post Office Department to satisfy his Joneses. There he finds the rooms and corridors thronged with other statesmen and their friends, crowds of Joneses and Smiths. The same anxious faces, the same eager eyes, the same nervously twitching lips, the same pictures of misery. After hours of restless waiting he succeeds in being listened to about the postoffice in Blankville, the papers covering that place are sent for, and our friend is blandly informed that there is no vacancy in that postoffice. "What?" exclaims our Congressman. "No vacancy? Why, of course, you will make one. Remove the incumbent. I must have that place. I have promised it to Mr. Jones, this meritorious friend of mine." The answer comes, calm and cruel: "The present postmaster has been in about two years. His record as an officer is excellent. There have never been any charges against him. There is absolutely no cause for removing him."

This is to our friend a thunderclap from a clear sky. Is he to confess himself powerless to get Jones the postoffice he has promised? It would ruin his prestige in his district, and Jones would become his enemy. What is to be done? Appeals to the Postmaster General and even to the President avail nothing. But was not something said about there being no charges against the present Blankville postmaster? Might not that defect be remedied? Why not get up some charges against that postmaster, be he ever so good an officer and blameless a man? This is the way out. Now to work!

When our member of Congress is again alone with

himself the recollection that he once was a gentleman painfully struggles up in his mind. What! Is he to instigate or even to countenance the trumping up of charges affecting the official and perhaps even the personal character of an honorable man to effect the removal of that man from an office efficiently filled, and this merely to enable him, the member of Congress, to redeem a promise which he never ought to have made? He would not look into a mirror at that moment for fear of seeing his own face. He does not dare to listen to a warning voice speaking within him. With cowardly haste he seeks refuge in the thought that politics is politics; that this is the custom of the country, and that so long as that custom permits and even obliges members of Congress to use the offices of the Government as rewards for their henchmen—why, such things will be done, whatever their character and effect. And thus the shameful game of trumped-up charges is played. And our friend has more Joneses to provide with more postoffices, which causes more conferences at the Department, in some cases the trumping up of more charges, the disappointment of more men who had promises, the making of more pledges to “furnish something equally as good,” and more sacrifices of honor and self-respect.

But now comes the task of getting for his friends places which are not, like the postoffices, regarded as “belonging” to the member of Congress, but for which he must compete with other members, and even with the more formidable Senators—places in the Departments, or consulships, or foreign missions, or revenue offices, or Indian agencies, and what-not. He visits the Departments, one after another, and humbly seeks in each the favor of that awful potentate, the appointment clerk, who can keep him informed of existing vacancies and who also may see to it that his papers are opportunely brought to the attention of the Secretary whenever a good chance for catching an office occurs. And, oh! those hours of desolate standing around, and of anxious waiting for a propitious moment when he can pour his supplications into the ear of the President or

of Cabinet ministers, painfully aware that the more impressively he speaks the more he is in danger of being set down by them as an intolerable bore.

That, however, is not the worst of it. Presently he discovers that he cannot possibly secure all the places he asks for, that he cannot gratify all the hopes he has excited—perhaps only very few of them—and that he must concentrate his efforts upon those few and drop the rest, lest he lose all. As to the few to be favored he is sorely tempted to select those whom he may expect to be the most useful to him, with scant regard for their fitness as to the places desired. But how drop the rest? Can he tell them that he is unable to press their claims to a successful issue, while they see him press the claims of others? This would be the way to make enemies. It cannot be thought of. But what else can he do? Make them believe that he is pressing their claims, but that after heroic efforts he is defeated by superior influence; throw the responsibility upon the President or the Cabinet ministers. And then comes the distressing spectacle of a member of Congress with a confiding constituent by his side appearing before a Department chief and making a glowing speech on the virtues of that constituent, and on his own ardent desire to see this excellent man placed in office according to his merits, assuring the Department chief, and charging him so to inform the President, that this is the Congressman's special request—while the Department chief thus addressed has been before advised by the same member of Congress that he cares nothing about this man but really wishes another to be provided for. And then the member of Congress accepts the warm thanks of the confiding constituent for this splendid effort of friendship.

In this manner weeks and weeks pass after the incoming of the new administration, and still our friend has on his hands a formidable number of pursuers to whom he has promised "something equally as good," and others, too, to whom he has promised nothing, but whom he thinks he cannot afford to offend by blunt refusals.

Some have left Washington but flood him with letters. Others have stayed and indomitably dog his steps. Some owe boarding bills in Washington, and have no money left for the home journey. In his despair he pays their bills, and buys them their railroad tickets to deliver himself of the insufferable infliction, promising to move heaven and earth for them in their absence. But there are a few who still have funds and will not go, and from them the wretched statesman, jaded and disgusted, at last runs away himself and hurries home. But there he finds no rest. Incessantly he is pestered by the reproaches of the disappointed, and by the impatience of those who are still expectants. He begins to doubt whether the patronage business has not made him more enemies than friends. Fortunate he is if he does not find himself forced to run away once more, without leaving his address behind, into some solitude far from the madding crowd. And yet he may have to fear that quiet solitude more than the distracting bustle he has escaped; for it will bring to him moments of self-contemplation when memories will rise up before him of promises made to be broken, of confidence invited to be betrayed, and of honor and self-respect lost, never to be retrieved. And yet, of the political debts which the spoils system seduced him to contract, only the most pressing have been paid.

So far he has gone only through the experience of the first months after the incoming of the new administration while Congress was not in session. The time arrives for Congress to meet, and now he thinks he will atone for it all by giving his whole soul to that duty for the performance of which he really was elected. But, alas! the old torment will not let him go. The men with claims who have not been provided for are still dogging his heels or mercilessly pelting him with letters, and like an errand boy they keep him running from Department to Department. Every new chance opening revives the pressure. The work is never, never done; and although it abates somewhat, it continues to trench most severely on the time, working power and

good humor which should wholly belong to the legislator's real duty.

Well, our friend tries hard to do the best he can under the circumstances, and flatters himself with the belief that he has at least his political home machine tolerably well arranged, but new complications arise. One of the office-holders appointed upon his recommendation so grossly misconducts himself as to make his removal imperative. There is no doubt as to the facts. But the delinquent public servant calls upon his Congressional patron for protection. Has he not a right to do so? Has he not been appointed simply by way of reward for services rendered to the member of Congress? Has he ever been expected by his patron to earn his salary by downright hard work for the public? Was he not rather to have "a good time" while in office, and to make out of it what he could? And now because he did so he is to lose the reward he had earned, and to be disgraced by removal to boot. Will the Congressional patron leave his client in the lurch? Our friend is a little puzzled at first. In spite of the many rebuffs it has suffered the old conscience speaks once more. Does his sense of duty permit him to endeavor to keep in office, to the evident detriment of the service and of the public interest, a man he knows to have proved himself unworthy? But there is also another voice speaking to him. Has not this unworthy public servant friends or relatives who exercise influence in his district? True, he ought never to have recommended this man for office, but can he now afford to make enemies of him and his clan? True, the integrity of the service and the public interest are entitled to consideration; but can he afford that consideration when one of his appointees is concerned and he himself has so much at stake? Well, he seeks to have the removal recalled. He does not find a willing ear. He begs, he protests, he blusters, he threatens, he entreats, he implores the Administration to do a thing which he knows it cannot do without being false to its public duty.

But still other complications come to plague him.



The Administration follows some policy which he feels himself in conscience bound to oppose; or vicious practices are discovered in some Government Department which his sense of duty commands him to denounce. His first impulse is to obey that command. But—has he not appeared before the President and before the Department chiefs as a petitioner for favors in the shape of offices for his friends? Will he not have to solicit similar favors again, and if he criticizes and opposes the Administration, will it not have the power not only to refuse further favors needed by him, but even to remove the persons appointed upon his recommendation? Nay, may not those very persons, his political retainers, the members of his home machine, if he opposes the Administration, turn against him and denounce him as a mugwump and a renegade, for the purpose of winning the favor of the Administration and of thus saving their own necks? He keenly feels that here his moral independence as a legislator is at stake—that moral independence which, if he is to do his duty to his country, can never be surrendered. But can he afford to maintain it at the risk of losing all the dearly-bought results of the management of the patronage in his district, and even of turning his own handiwork against himself? No; unless there be in him some of the stuff of which martyrs are made, the moral independence of the legislator will die as a sacrifice at the shrine of that patronage. And to many legislators making that sacrifice, it will hardly occur that it bears all the features of a bargain essentially corrupt.

Here I will stop, although the catalogue of perplexities, embarrassments, reductions, debasements and abandonments of their true duty, which the spoils system imposes upon members of Congress, is by no means exhausted. But it is enough. Will you say that the picture I have drawn is, after all, only a creation of fancy? I call it a picture of the possibilities brought forth by the spoils system; but only too much of it is a picture of reality. Indeed, I have known Senators and members of the House of Representatives who with

good conscience and just pride could affirm that they never made a direct or indirect promise of office to bring about their nomination or election; that they never recommended any person for appointment whom they did not honestly believe well qualified for the place to be filled, and that they never depended upon the manipulation of the patronage to advance their political fortunes. Such men, however, while resisting its temptations and debasing influences, have by no means been exempt from the harassing and distracting effects of the spoils system, and, I am sure, they are among the foremost to condemn it and to favor its abolition. Neither do I ignore the fact that there are members of Congress who, moved by the impulse of gratitude or by generous sympathy, take hearty pleasure in doing a good turn to a friend, or in trying to aid a struggling ambition, by securing to them a comfortable living or an opportunity to rise, and who to this end submit to work and trouble without selfish motive.

But on the whole, the effect of the patronage system is certainly such as I have described it. In a number of instances, by no means small, the picture I have drawn is true in every touch, and in many more it is true in very great part. I speak of this with assurance, for I know it from my own personal observation. During the years of my official life I was not only myself exposed to the office-seeking pressure, but I have many a time heard the confessions of national legislators speaking of their experiences and doings just as I have portrayed them, some with the brazen indifference born of debasing habit, others with the accents of deeply mortified self-respect, of humiliation and shame. More than once I have listened to men of originally noble impulses and high-minded ambition, as they told the story of their miseries—how, seduced by what they accepted as the custom of active politics, they had entangled themselves in the meshes of questionable engagements almost without knowing it; how they had sometimes been forced to recommend for office men whom they knew to be unfit; how the misconduct of such men,

demanding protection at their hands, subjected them to abominable perplexity and self-abasement ; how their pride was humbled by their attitude as beggars for favors not only before members of the Government but even before Department clerks ; how, not seldom, their sense of honor and duty revolted when they had to urge the removal of a worthy officer simply to make room for one of their own henchmen ; how they felt themselves like bondmen in their relations to those in power, on account of the persons to be put or to be kept in office ; how the patronage business robbed them of their time, spoiled their working capacity, enervated their spirits, and hampered and clogged in every possible way their one time supreme ambition to devote themselves heart and soul to their legislative duties for the common good, and how they now cursed the galling, debasing, disgusting servitude to which the patronage had subjected them.

And more than that. Many a time when, as Secretary of the Interior, I had to remove public servants for peremptory cause which absolutely left me no choice, I received the visits of members of Congress who had recommended the appointment of the men in question, and who now, although they had to admit the reasons compelling the dismissal, yet assailed me with remonstrances, threats, supplications, and even tears, to move me to a violation of my obvious duty. And I do not remember an instance of such appeal when, on the part of the suppliant, the matter of the public interest was in the least drawn into consideration. But I do remember more than one case in which the member of Congress demanding the revocation of such a removal, went as far as to threaten that unless I complied the appropriation for my Department would have a hard time in passing the House.

It was in a magazine article written by Gen. Jacob D. Cox, ex-Secretary of the Interior, that I first found a description of Senators and members of the House of Representatives personally introducing to a Cabinet minister constituents of theirs as candidates for certain

places, extolling the merits of those constituents in the warmest language, and with apparently earnest eloquence urging their appointment, while the Cabinet minister had in his desk notes from the same statesmen cautioning him not to pay any regard to their recommendations. I must confess that this startled me. Being at that time a member of the Senate myself, I inquired of two Cabinet ministers then in office whether any instances of such duplicity had ever come to their own personal notice. The answer was that indeed they had, and they were by no means infrequent. But I have not to depend upon other men's testimony; for a few years later I, myself, sitting behind my desk as Secretary of the Interior, looked into the eyes of Senators and Representatives who played before me the same ignoble trick, and into the eyes of their confiding victims, and I did not know whom to pity most, the deceiver or the deceived. If there is anything I have to be sorry for it is that I contented myself by disregarding their recommendations altogether instead of uncovering the dastardly fraud on the spot.

There can be no serious doubt, therefore, as to the facts. No man of experience in our political life can honestly question them. Nor do I state these facts now for the first time. I discussed them in the Senate of the United States many years ago without meeting a denial. Can there be any doubt as to their significance? It means that the use of patronage by members of Congress is essentially corrupt and corrupting. It is not that gross form of corruption which consists in passing bribe money from hand to hand. But it is that more dangerous and demoralizing, because more insinuating, corruption which wraps itself in the garb of party zeal, of gratitude, of generous sympathy, and in this disguise is received and countenanced among respectable people. Never has there been a more elaborate combination of self-deception and deception of others. Look at the elementary facts. A public place instituted solely for the service of the people, and, according to legal intent, to be filled with a person fitted for that service, is promised by the

legislator to a person as a reward or inducement for service rendered or to be rendered to *him*, with slight, if any, regard for the fitness of that person for public duty. The performance of that promise the legislator calls an "honorable obligation," while in fact the honor was lost when the obligation was incurred. The legislator seeks to obtain that office for his retainer from the executive, representing it as an appointment to be made in the public interest, while in fact it is the carrying out of a private bargain. The legislator calls the obtaining of this office an exercise of his legitimate influence, while in fact he has accepted a favor which undermines his moral independence by putting him under the influence of the executive. Having bribed a useful politician with the promise, he is himself bribed by the executive by the fulfillment. This manipulation of the patronage the legislator calls taking care of his constituents, while in fact he is seeking to take care of himself. He calls it doing his duty, while in fact by meddling with the executive function he is doing something which the Constitution never intended that he should do; and he does this at the expense of the time, working power and moral force he should devote to the great duty which the Constitution really imposes upon him.

If, as we must assume, government to be honest and beneficial must be based upon truth, then the manipulation of the patronage by members of Congress is in the highest degree repugnant to good government, for it is the very hotbed of multiplied falsehood.

If, to make democratic government truly a government for the people, it is essentially required that public offices should not be diverted from the public purpose for which they are intended, then the manipulation of the patronage by members of Congress insidiously undermines democratic government, for of all the perversions known the most colossal in dimensions and the most demoralizing in effect is that which turns the legislator into an office-broker and a spoils-monger.

If it is true, which nobody will deny, that as our Government grows greater in the magnitude and variety

of its functions, it requires, in the legislative no less than in the executive sphere, greater ability, knowledge, application and moral courage to deal with the vast and complex problems confronting it, then there can be no bitterer satire upon the growth of the Republic than the legislator to whom that growth is of especial importance on account of the increasing number of postoffices and revenue places he has to look out for; and no sadder spectacle than the legislator who, although possessing the ability as well as the ambition to serve the Republic according to the needs of the time, permits himself to be dragged away from his real duty, and to be crippled in power and wrecked in morals by the tyranny of so vicious an abuse.

I risk nothing in saying that there are very few members of Congress who have not often at heart secretly cursed this abominable practice, and wished it had never existed—aye, very few who in their inmost hearts will not to-day admit every word I have used as literally true. I have indeed heard some proclaim with an assumption of superior manliness that they are gentlemen who think it a matter of honor never to forget their friends, and who believe in rewarding them for every service accepted from them. They may be told that there is no objection to their remembering their friends, but that they would be better gentlemen and also better legislators if they rewarded those who have done them a good turn at their own expense and not at the expense of the public.

I have heard others say: "Yes, the spoils system is a curse, a greater curse to members of Congress than to anyone else. We heartily wish it did not exist. But it has come upon us by tradition; it is part of the political customs of the country. We are its victims, its slaves. What can we do but submit and make the best of it?" This is the voice of despondent weakness. The answer is simple: "If you wish it did not exist, why do you not make it cease to exist? If you gave half the energy and labor you fritter away in manipulating the patronage, to the task of abolishing the detestable evil, it would soon completely disappear, and you

would be free to give yourselves altogether to your duties to the country." Then, why not go to work with a clear purpose and resolute determination until the task is finished?

There are in fact only two classes of members of Congress who have a real interest in preserving the patronage. One of them consists of those who are so weak in intellectual ability and acquirements that they must despair of maintaining themselves in public life unless by bribing men with places and salaries they build up for themselves a mercenary following. And the other class consists of abler men, who by attracting to themselves through the distribution of spoils the selfish and unscrupulous element in politics, seek to organize for their own use and purposes a power strong enough to maintain itself by sinister means in defiance of public opinion, and thus to subjugate to their own will their party organizations, and through them their districts or States. And in a democracy so abhorrent and dangerous a power should never be permitted to exist. But these two classes of members of Congress, the hopelessly incapable and the aspirants to boss-ship, form together only a small majority. They are vastly outnumbered by those whose interests lie in the opposite direction, and who, it is to be hoped, will recognize that they have infinitely more to gain than to lose by the complete abolition of the patronage system.

Every member of Congress who cherishes the glory and well-being of his country, the safety of its democratic institutions, and the efficiency of its government, and who values his own honor and dignity as a man and his usefulness and moral independence as a legislator, will, therefore, heartily rejoice that the merit system has gained so large and so firm a lodgment in our administrative machinery. He will, with a sense of relief, contemplate the deliverance of the clerical force in our great Government Departments at Washington, and in the larger Government establishments throughout the country, from the baneful touch of spoils politics. He will, whatever his party relations may be, give ungrudg-

ing credit to former Administrations for having established the reformatory system, and to this Administration for what it has done to advance it—for having put under Civil Service Rules the whole Department of Agriculture up to the very top, the Government Printing Office, and important parts of the Indian service, of the Customs service, of the Internal Revenue service, of the Postal service, and the Geological Survey, making, down to the first of November, an addition to the competitive list of more than 12,500 places. He will thank the Secretary of the Navy for the great improvements in the regulations governing his laboring force. He will watch with jealous care the enforcement of the Civil Service Law and of the Rules made under it, and never fail to expose and censure any neglect or violation of them, no matter by members of what party they be committed. He will go farther. He will understand that the vicious influences of the patronage system will continue to poison our political life and to vex and harass him especially, so long as there is subject to appointment by favor a number of places sufficient to keep alive the office-seeking mania, and to give a chance to the spoils-mongering politician. He will therefore welcome with gladness every possibility to extend the operation of the merit principle, not only to every place within the limits originally contemplated by the Civil Service Law, but also outside of them.

Thus he will heed with eager satisfaction the universal and emphatic demand of the mercantile community that the consular service shall cease to be the football of political machination.

He will, therefore, applaud the recent order of the President instituting thorough examinations for aspirants to consular places, not, indeed, as a final measure, but merely as a "step in the right direction," as the report of the Secretary of State called it, an advance toward a more thorough and permanent reform to be embodied in appropriate legislation of which, it may be hoped, a provision for *competitive* examinations will form a distinctive feature.



He will earnestly endeavor to promote the practical adoption of that wise recommendation recently made by the Postmaster-General that the Assistant Postmasters-General, for obvious reasons, be withdrawn from the reach of political changes, and be put upon the footing of merit.

He will seriously consider whether there are not other Assistant Secretaries in other Departments who, with great advantage to the public interest, might for the same reasons be put upon the same footing, thus introducing in our Government the non-partisan under-secretary, the expert Departmental business manager, who exists in almost every well regulated government, and is looked upon as indispensable. Even in our own Government this system is not without precedent, as all know who remember the late Assistant Secretary Hunter of the State Department.

Our conscientious member of Congress will earnestly favor the recommendation recently made in the annual report of the Secretary of the Interior that the whole Indian service be rescued from the dangerous touch of party politics—especially dangerous in this instance—by giving it a non-partisan head and organization; and it will readily occur to him that there is not the slightest reason of a public nature why the rule of the merit tenure should not be applied to the various Commissioners in the Interior and Treasury Departments, and to the auditors, comptrollers, registers and so on, whose duties have nothing to do with the so-called “political policy” of the Administration.

But with especially keen interest will he remember the forcible plea made last year by the late Postmaster General, Mr. Bissell, and repeated by his successor, Mr. Wilson, demonstrating the absolute necessity, for reasons of the public interest, of taking the whole Postal service, the postmasters included, altogether out of politics; and he will therefore hail with especial joy the recent order of the President, authorizing the Postmaster-General to consolidate with the principal postoffices the smaller ones surrounding them, so as to make them

mere branch offices, and to place all persons employed therein under the Civil Service Rules. This order, if acted upon with courage and energy, will bring forth inestimable benefit. It will give the people better service by localizing its direction according to local wants. It will immensely simplify the system of accounting which now has to deal with over 70,000 individual postmasters, a great many of whom, as they are at present selected, will never learn how to make a correct report—and thus lead to better business methods, prompter returns and greater economy. It will draw many thousands of postoffices, from top to bottom, under the protection and control of the Civil Service Law. And this involves to our member of Congress a blessing of incalculable value.

The postoffices scattered by thousands all over the land have done more than anything else to keep alive the spoils idea among our people. More than anything else they have been the prizes fought for in national contests by local politicians. More than anything else they have served to demoralize the popular mind with the notion that a change of party in power must mean a partisan change in all the offices, and thus to turn our party contests into scrambles for plunder. It is no exaggeration to say that the postoffice used as party spoil has been the bane of American politics. It has especially been the curse of the member of Congress, hounding, tormenting and degrading him every day of his official life. To be rid of that curse will be to him a true deliverance. Every postoffice, the disposal of which he loses, will be so much gain to his working power, to his freedom and moral independence, to his usefulness and dignity as a legislator. He will, therefore, not only do the utmost in his power to aid the Postmaster-General in the work of reorganizing the postal service according to the President's order, but he will zealously promote the passage of a law bringing under effective Civil Service Rules those postoffices which the President's order cannot reach. He will contribute to this result all the more gladly, as, with the postal

service taken out of party politics, the greatest citadel of the spoils system will have fallen.

He will go still farther. Candid reflection will convince him that the four-years-term law must be repealed. That vicious law was a fraud in its inception. Being passed under the pretence of utility, while it was only in fact to serve the wire-pulling machinations of a candidate for the Presidency, and signed by a well-meaning President without consideration, it has proved ever since one of the most prolific sources of demoralization and mischief to the service, to the public interest and to our whole political life. The foremost statesmen—Jefferson, Madison, John Quincy Adams, Clay, Calhoun, Webster, Benton and many more—have condemned it and demanded its repeal. What they did not accomplish should be accomplished now; for it must be clear to the plainest understanding that the merit appointment must logically be accompanied by the merit tenure. Indeed, *merit appointment with merit tenure* comprehends the whole program of Civil Service Reform.

Need I say what this means to the member of Congress? Not the surrender of any privilege or power of value. It means the emancipation of Congress from the scandalous and debasing slavery of the patronage. It means the restoration of the legislator to his true functions. It means the removal from party spirit, from party contests and from party government of the demoralizing element of the meanest selfishness.

It may seem extravagant to hope so much. Why should we consider it so? There are some among us who stood at the cradle of the Civil Service Reform movement. They remember the time when the practical politician looked upon the Civil Service Reformer as a visionary dreamer of singularly hopeless conceit—as little better than a harmless idiot who might be tolerated at large without the slightest danger to the existing order of things. When we remember that time, which does not lie very far behind us, and then contemplate the marvelous change that has since taken place, will the hope for the complete triumph of the cause we advocate still

appear extravagantly sanguine? Indeed, who would but a few years ago have ventured to predict that the entire ministerial part of the national service would be under the merit system by this time? There is but very little of it outside now. And I trust my imagination does not delude me when I believe President Cleveland to be determined, as to the extension of classification, to leave to his successor little or nothing to do that can be done by executive action alone. Is it unreasonable to expect that Congress will also do that which the enlightened public opinion of the country and the development of the Republic so clearly and forcibly demand?

At our last annual meeting I spoke of the remarkable strength the Civil Service Reform movement had gained in public sentiment. I am happy to add now that the growth of that strength has continued. It was strikingly manifested by the overwhelming popular majority by which the merit system was adopted for the municipal government of Chicago, and by its successful introduction. Efforts are being made in various other places to follow this great example. We have indeed to deplore two occurrences which show that the spoils politicians have by no means given up the battle, but still strive to recover what they have lost. One of these occurrences is the passage by the legislature of Massachusetts, in spite of the Governor's spirited resistance, of a law striking a vicious blow at the integrity of the merit system in the public service in that State, and at the same time at the honor and the true interests of the war veterans. And the other is the utterly lawless conduct of the Mayor of Indianapolis, who has simply declared himself not bound by the provisions of the city charter prescribing the introduction of the merit system in the municipal service. Such things admonish us that militant watchfulness must still be the order of the day in the Reform camp. I am glad to say that in Massachusetts the constitutionality of the obnoxious law is ably contested in the courts; and we all know that the champions of Civil Service Reform in Indiana are of too belligerent a spirit to let the refractory Mayor sleep on his spoils laurels in comfort.

On the other hand, in the State of New York and in its great cities the Reform system has made most cheering progress. The embodiment in the State Constitution of the Civil Service Reform clause, and its faithful observance by the Governor, the Mayors of the great municipalities and the respective Civil Service boards, have caused a very large extension of Civil Service Rules and a vigorous enforcement of them. One of the most important features of that progress consists in the adoption and the successful operation in the large cities of the labor-registration system, which rescues the laboring men doing public work from the tyrannical control and the rapacity of political bosses and machines. And now in Maryland, too, the day of Reform has dawned with unexpected brilliancy, and I trust that old State will step into the front rank of its champions. There are several others that promise to follow her.

Nothing could be more encouraging than this steady growth of the Civil Service Reform movement in popular favor. Most of its former opponents in the press have become converts to its side. That without the introduction of the merit system no permanent overthrow of corrupt machine rule and no thorough reform of our large municipal governments can be expected, is now a truth generally accepted by the popular understanding. Such convictions bring to the movement the aid of organizations bearing different names but having ends in view of which Civil Service Reform is a prerequisite. The Civil Service Reform associations proper, which not many years ago led a somewhat lonesome life in the field of public endeavor, are constantly reënforced by additions to their number. It is one of the most cheering signs of the time that such associations are being established at our universities and colleges, enlisting in our work the rising generation that will speak the word of the future. We may especially congratulate ourselves upon the recent organization of a Women's Auxiliary Civil Service Reform Association in New York, several of whose members have already achieved enviable renown for important public enter-

prises successfully conducted, and all of whom will, no doubt, bring powerful aid and encouragement to this.

With such successes and such moral forces behind us we may indeed hope to see the day when our party warfare will be contests of opinion free from the demoralizing and repulsive interference of the plunder-chase; when a change of party in the national Administration will no longer present the barbarous spectacle of a spoils debauch, torturing the nostrils of our own people and disgracing the Republic in the eyes of civilized mankind; when our Presidents and heads of the executive Departments will no longer be the almoners of party government, in danger of their lives from the furious onset of the begging throng, but will be respected as officers of state having high duties to fulfill which demand all their strength and ability; when the public offices, national, State and municipal, will cease to be the feudal fiefs distributed by bosses, or the merchandise of spoils-jobbers, and again serve the true purpose for which they have been instituted, thus becoming once more an integral element of government for the people; and when our legislators, escaped from the shackles of the spoils bondage, no longer beset by the snares and pitfalls which have threatened to wreck their morals and their self-respect, no longer supplicating for executive favor, will be able and proud to devote all their energies to the great tasks which at a time so full of difficult problems the country imposes upon them. And thus, while in years gone by we found an incentive to strenuous effort in the greatness of the obstacles to be overcome, we may now work on inspired by the hope of complete achievement.

## MEETING OF THE LEAGUE.

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COSMOS CLUB, December 13, 1895—10.30 A. M.

The President took the chair.

The Secretary called the roll of delegates.

The first business in order being the election of a president and vice-presidents for the ensuing year, Mr. Bonaparte, of Baltimore, moved that the Secretary be directed to cast one ballot for the re-election of Hon. Carl Schurz as president, and for the re-election of the present vice-presidents. The motion was put by Mr. Bonaparte and carried unanimously. The Secretary cast the ballot and the nominees were declared duly elected.

Mr. Estes, for the Auditing Committee, appointed by the General Committee, reported that the Committee had examined the accounts and vouchers of the Treasurer, as submitted in his report to the General Committee, and that they had been found to be correct. On motion the report was accepted.\*

Mr. Schieffelin, for the Finance Committee, submitted a budget of estimated expenses for the ensuing year, amounting to \$4,500. On motion of Mr. Welsh the various items of the budget were approved, and the expenditures involved duly authorized. At the suggestion of Mr. Schieffelin, the Chairman appointed Mr. C. W. Watson, of New York, a member of the Finance Committee, with authority to countersign vouchers.

Mr. Bonaparte, for the special committee appointed to report on additions to the Classified Service, and on the recent Executive order concerning the Consular Service, submitted a written report, which, on motion, was adopted and ordered filed.†

Mr. Straus reported verbally for the Committee on Consular Reform, stating the action taken by the committee in promoting the bills to re-organize the Consular Service, introduced in the last Congress by Senators Morgan and Lodge. The

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\* Page 47.    † Page 132.

committee had had a hearing before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, which subsequently reported favorably the Morgan bill, modified in several respects. The bill, however, had not reached a vote before the adjournment of Congress. The committee had not as yet considered the practical relation of the recent executive order to the matter of legislation, nor determined whether or not the Morgan bill, if re-introduced, should be changed to embrace any feature of the new plan. On motion the report was accepted.

The Secretary reported the efforts made by the League during the pendency of the Morgan and Lodge bills to secure favorable action from Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade and other similar organizations. The most important of these, representing every large city of the country, had responded, and copies of the resolutions and memorials adopted had been forwarded to Messrs. Morgan and Lodge and presented in the Senate. The Secretary added that he had been informed by Senator Lodge at the close of the last session that the bill then pending, or a similar measure, would be re-introduced shortly after the assembling of the fifty-fourth Congress.

Mr. Dana stated that Senator Lodge had informed him that the bill would be re-introduced during the present month.

Mr. Siddons asked Mr. Straus whether he would favor the enactment of a law based on the recent executive order. Mr. Straus replied that he probably would, but with something more; the plan if made permanent should be changed in various respects, and competitive examinations should be substituted for the "pass" examinations now proposed.

The president called for a report from the Committee on Legislation, appointed in pursuance of action taken at the September meeting of the Executive Committee. The secretary stated that the committee had not organized, a permanent chairman not having as yet been secured. He had submitted to the individual members of the committee, however, the following proposed measures of legislation:

- (1) A bill to exclude political influence in the appointment of postmasters and to assure to postmasters tenure during good behavior.
- (2) A bill to provide for the re-organization of the Consular Service.



- (3) A bill to prohibit the solicitation of political assessments or contributions, in any manner, from officers or employees of the United States.
- (4) A bill to provide for the selection of all laborers employed by the Government, through a system similar to that in operation in the Navy Yard.
- (5) A bill to provide for classification under Civil Service rules, of the employees of the District of Columbia.
- (6) A bill to give the Civil Service Commission power to investigate all cases of dismissal and, in the course of any inquiry they may make, to administer oaths and examine witnesses.

When the Committee is organized these suggestions would be at once considered, and the work of preparing bills taken up. The bill to re-organize the Consular Service would continue to be the especial charge of the Committee on Consular Reform; that relating to the District of Columbia would be prepared and promoted by the local Association. With both these bodies the committee would confer. The president announced subsequently that he had appointed to the Committee on Legislation Messrs. Sherman S. Rogers, of Buffalo; Dorman B. Eaton, of New York; R. H. Dana, of Cambridge; John C. Rose, of Baltimore, and F. L. Siddons, of Washington, and that Mr. Rogers had consented to serve as chairman.

Mr. Charles W. Stetson, of Washington, read a report of the efforts made by the local association to secure the adoption of civil service rules in the District government.\*

Mr. Estes read a letter from a correspondent stating that Hon. J. T. Kilbreth, Collector of the Port of New York, had suggested that action be taken by the League toward securing the transfer of all deputy collectors from the excepted to the competitive list, such a step being, in the opinion of the collector, highly important to continued improvement in the efficiency of the Customs Service.

On motion of Mr. Estes, the matter was referred to the Executive Committee, with the request that a committee of three be appointed to urge the importance of this suggestion upon the Executive.

On motion of Mr. Wood, it was voted that a like committee be appointed by the Executive Committee to urge upon

the president the importance of taking all assistant postmasters from the excepted list.

Mr. Rogers, for the Committee on Resolutions, read the resolutions prepared, and submitted them to the League for action. Mr. Wyman moved that the resolutions be considered *seriatim* before being adopted in final form, and the motion was carried.

After some preliminary discussion of the report, the president announced that further consideration would be postponed to the afternoon session in order that the delegates might accept the invitation extended by Hon. W. G. Rice, to meet the Civil Service Commissioners at his residence, at one o'clock. On motion the League then adjourned.

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#### COSMOS CLUB, Dec. 13, 1895.

The President took the chair.

Mr. Justi read a paper on "The State of Civil Service Reform Sentiment in the South." \*

Dr. E. M. Gallaudet, president of the Gallaudet College for the Deaf and Dumb, made an interesting address on the peculiar value and necessity of Civil Service rules for the selection of employees in institutions for the deaf and dumb under state control. He offered a resolution, with the suggestion that copies be sent by the secretary to the Executive of each state, urging the importance of maintaining the principle of permanent tenure of office during good behavior in institutions for the deaf and dumb, and protesting against the interference of spoils politics in the affairs of such institutions. Mr. Thorp suggested that the recommendation be extended to cover asylums for the blind and other humane institutions. On motion of Mr. Richardson, the resolution was referred to the Committee on Resolutions to be reported by that committee with amendments conforming to the suggestion made.

Mr. Bonaparte read a paper on "The Reign and Overthrow of an Office-holding Oligarchy." †

Mr. Welsh read a paper on "Civil Service Reform in its Bearings upon the Interests of Workingmen." ‡

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\* Page 81.    † Page 100.    ‡ Page 116.

The president then announced the order of miscellaneous business.

The application of the Civil Service Reform Club of Yale University for admission to the League was submitted by the club's representative, Mr. Lanier McKee. The president stated that without the formality of a vote he might assure the new organization of cordial reception to membership.

The report of the Committee on Resolutions was then taken up, and after having been considered, section by section, was adopted unanimously in the following form :

The past year has witnessed a continued and remarkable progress in the Civil Service Reform. It is attested not only by the large extensions made by the President to the classified service, but by the approbation with which those extensions have been received by the people. The testimony of the heads of Departments and Departmental divisions as to the operation of the Reform system in the conduct of the public service, is concurrent and more than ever favorable, and the press, with few exceptions, has given to the movement a support which indicates that in its judgment the experimental period has passed. There are unmistakable indications also that at last the character of the Civil Service Reform is being recognized in the great cities of the country, and that any attempt to remedy the evils which afflict, and to remove the scandals which disgrace municipal life must be futile so long as its public service is in the hands of spoilsmen. The magnificent popular victory in Chicago for Civil Service Reform is the herald of like victories in all the other great cities of the country. The adoption by the State of New York of a constitutional amendment giving to the competitive system the sanction and security of the organic law has been followed by a marked improvement in the administration of the Civil Service law in that State. Only an honest recognition by appointing officers of their plain duty under the Constitution in the appointment and retention of suitable officials seems now to be necessary, in order to give that great State, with its numerous cities, a thorough and harmoniously working system of appointment to office upon the ground of merit and fitness alone.

The League congratulates the country upon the promulgation of the recent plan of the President and the Postmaster-General to consolidate with the principal post-offices the smaller ones surrounding them, so as to make the latter mere branch offices, and on the recent order to place all persons employed therein, including the postmasters of these branch offices, within the classified service. We trust that this plan may be carried out with energy and courage, so that it may receive a prompt and general application.

The League commends the order of President Cleveland of September 20, 1895, concerning the mode of appointing Consular officers, as an ef-

fort to promote the efficiency of the service, and as a recognition of the principle that fitness and qualification should control such appointments and promotion. The League recommends that this order be extended to all purely Consular officers whose compensation exceeds \$2,500, and that it also include subordinate officers in the Diplomatic service. The League further recommends, in order that the reform be enduring, and that this executive order may not meet the same fate as the similar executive orders of 1866, 1872 and 1873, that a suitable law be enacted by Congress embodying these reforms; and also that such law provide so far as possible for competitive examinations to be conducted by members of the Civil Service Commission.

The League commends the order of the Postmaster-General requiring that no letter-carrier shall be removed except for cause and upon written charges, and it urges the application of a similar rule to other branches of the classified service.

The League renews its demand for the repeal of the law limiting to four years the terms of certain administrative officers as unjust, impolitic, a prolific source of demoralization and mischief to the public service and to our whole political life, and especially calculated to impair the beneficent effects of recent reforms. "Merit appointments must logically be accompanied by merit tenure."

The League recommends that the present law against soliciting contributions for political purposes from federal employees be so amended as to prohibit such solicitations in any manner or place, and that the Civil Service Commission be given the power to compel the attendance of witnesses, and to put them upon oath or affirmation.

The reforms in the federal and State service already made are in the highest degree important and gratifying, but they are only a part of the work to be done. Municipal maladministration is the deepest disgrace, and one of the gravest dangers of the present time. The great spoils-men of to-day are plundering our cities. Their power to do so lies in their control of the offices; their overthrow would be the substitution for political influence of the merit system as the test of appointment to office. All Municipal Reform must be based upon Civil Service Reform. We therefore urge upon all seeking good government for our cities the paramount importance of securing the adoption therein of the merit system of appointment.

And we respectfully urge upon Congress the extension of this system by law to the District of Columbia.

Mr. Rogers, for the Committee on Resolutions, reported the resolution offered by Dr. Gallaudet, in the following form:

*Resolved*, That it is of the utmost importance to establish and maintain the principle of permanent tenure of office during good behavior in

schools for the education of deafmutes and of the blind, and in charitable, humane, educational and penal institutions. The League indignantly protests against the interference of spoils politics in the management of such schools and institutions, and it urgently demands that the shameful and disastrous abuses now existing be peremptorily forbidden by legislation.

The resolution was adopted unanimously.

The secretary reported for the Publication Committee that in accordance with the direction of the Executive Committee a plan for the future publication of *Good Government*, in connection with the office of the League, in New York City, had been agreed upon. The plan provided, briefly, that the management of the paper be assumed by the secretary, the more active members of the League to assist in the preparation of purely editorial material, and the news columns to contain information concerning the progress of the civil service reform movement similar to that given heretofore in the abstract of the monthly report of the New York Association. The usual departments would be maintained, with special regard to reports from local associations, municipal reform organizations, the College Civil Service Reform League and other bodies. The Washington office would be continued and regular Washington correspondence furnished. The size of the paper would probably be reduced, but every effort would be made to maintain its character as a journal and as the organ of the League.

On motion of Mr. Wyman, the plan submitted was approved, and the arrangement of further details was referred to a committee consisting of Mr. Cary, Mr. Collins and the secretary.

Mr. Davis, of Cincinnati, referring to a suggestion previously made by Mr. Estes, moved that the members of any local association paying annually a stated sum for the purpose, receive *Good Government* without further subscription. Mr. Bonaparte moved, as an amendment, that the plan proposed be referred with power to the Publication Committee. The amendment was accepted and the motion carried.

The secretary read letters from the Round Table Club, and the Old Oak Club, of Nashville, Tenn., inviting the League

to hold its sixteenth annual meeting in that city. This invitation was endorsed in very cordial terms in a communication signed by the Mayor of Nashville, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, and the president of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition Company.

Mr. Charles P. Noyes stated that he had been commissioned by the Civil Service Reform Association and the Civic Federation of St. Paul, Minn., to invite the League, on their behalf, to hold its next meeting in that city.

Mr. Justi expressed the hope that Nashville would be selected, and assured the League a hearty welcome.

On motion the invitations were referred to the Executive Committee, and the secretary was directed, in acknowledging them, to express the sense of cordial appreciation in which they had been received.

A communication from the Committee on Civil Service of the National Association of Post-Office Clerks, asking that the League recommend to Congress legislation embodying and extending to all branches of the classified postal service the provisions of Postal Order 235, regulating removals, was read by the secretary. On motion the matter was referred to the Committee on Legislation with power to make the recommendation proposed.

A communication from Dr. C. W. Zaremba, suggesting that the League consider the advisability of the establishment by Congress of a National Academy for the preparation of candidates for the higher branches of the Civil Service, was read, and, on motion, referred to the Executive Committee.

On motion of Mr. Reynolds it was unanimously voted that the president be requested to express, on behalf of the League, a grateful appreciation of the hearty reception and generous entertainment it has received at the hands of the Civil Service Reform Association of the District of Columbia.

On motion of Mr. Foulke the thanks of the League were tendered also to the officers and members of the Cosmos Club for the use of the club's headquarters, and to Rev. Dr. Alex. Mackay-Smith and Hon. W. G. Rice, for the hospitality extended by them to the League.

Mr. Thorp moved that the League express its high appreciation of the eloquent and inspiring address delivered pub-

licly by the president, and that the thanks of the League be tendered him. The motion was carried unanimously.

The League then adjourned.

*Attest :*

GEORGE MCANENY,  
*Secretary.*

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On the evening of the 13th a reception was tendered by the Civil Service Reform Association, of the District of Columbia, to the visiting delegates, at the Arlington Hotel. Interesting addresses were made in the course of the evening by Rev. Dr. Alexander Mackay-Smith, who presided, Hon. Carl Schurz, Hon. J. Sterling Morton, Secretary of Agriculture, Charles J. Bonaparte, Hon. Sherman S. Rogers, Hon. Everett P. Wheeler, Hon. Wm. Dudley Foulke, Hon. J. H. Eckels, Comptroller of the Currency, and Rt. Rev. John F. Hurst.

The delegates were entertained at luncheon on the 12th, by the Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Mackay-Smith, and on the 13th by Hon. Wm. G. Rice, meeting on the latter occasion, Mr. Rice's associate Civil Service Commissioners, Hon. John R. Procter and Hon. J. B. Harlow, the Postmaster-General, Hon. William L. Wilson, the Secretary of the Interior, Hon. Hoke Smith, and the Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Morton.

# REPORT OF THE TREASURER.

(Summarized.)

## GENERAL FUND.

Balance on hand, Dec. 10, 1894, . . . . . \$1,075.03

RECEIPTS.—Contributions . . . . . \$1,410.50  
 Balance of Anti-Spoils League Fund 32.80  
 Sale of documents . . . . . 26.06 \$1,469.36

EXPENDITURES: \$2,544.39

Printing and postage . . . . . \$721.17  
 Office rent . . . . . 250.00  
 Clerk hire . . . . . 377.00  
 Paid to William Potts, under resolution of the League . . . . . 550.01  
 Traveling expenses . . . . . 97.20  
 Freight and expressage . . . . . 28.02  
 Engrossing . . . . . 3.50  
 Congressional Record . . . . . 4.00  
 Expenses of collections . . . . . 24.90  
 Office expenses . . . . . 138.32 2,194.12

Balance on deposit at Continental Trust Co . . . . . \$350.27

## GOOD GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE FUND.

Balance on hand, Dec, 10, 1894, . . . . . \$56.90

RECEIPTS.—Massachusetts Associations . . . . . \$965.02  
 New York City Association . . . . . 520.00  
 Philadelphia " . . . . . 282.36  
 Geneva, N. Y. " . . . . . 30.00  
 Norwich, Conn. " . . . . . 22.00  
 Buffalo, N. Y. " . . . . . 21.60  
 Henry Villard . . . . . 75.00  
 Theodore Roosevelt. . . . . 26.00 1,941.98

EXPENDITURES: \$1,998.88

To F. E. Leupp, Editor . . . . . \$1,941.60  
 Balance of loan paid New York Association . . . . . 50.00 1,991.60

Balance on hand at Continental Trust Co . . . . . \$7.28

E. & O. E.

SILAS W. BURT,  
 Treasurer.



## Address of Hon. John W. Ross,

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS.

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THE people of this District extend their welcome to all true and worthy citizens who visit the capital, but the warmth of the greeting is intensified when their guests are such eminent and public spirited men as those who compose the Civil Service Reform League. To my mind the success of the work in which you are engaged is one of the signs of the time that this old world of ours is growing wiser and better. Thoughtful men of all of the political parties have for years recognized the truth that in selecting employees for municipal, state or national governments, the same test should be applied as would be applied in the selection of employees for any great business enterprise, viz.: fitness for the place, and competency to return an equivalent for the salary paid. The main differences of opinion have been with regard to how to apply that test, and so it has taken time to vindicate the system embodied in the national civil service law. Criticisms mainly with regard to these details, some just, and many more unjust, indulged in by men of public standing, have hampered the cause, but during the years since 1883 the results have been so beneficent and so satisfactory that the great majority of the American people, whose chief desire is wise and honest and economical administration of their affairs, will never consent to a repeal of this law, nor to any modification which implies a step backward. And from my standpoint the fairest field for the work in which you are engaged is the municipality. Now, this District, as you are aware, is a municipal corporation established by an Act of Congress, and the municipal officers who serve therein, feel a heavy responsibility in certain directions; they are municipal officers who are the mere trustees for the people who reside within their jurisdiction and their business agents. If the municipal appointing officer is true to his trust, he will, in

making appointments, be governed by the accepted replies to those old fashioned questions with regard to the applicant ; is he capable, is he honest ? in the same manner as he would if he were a director of a bank, or the proprietor of a great business enterprise. Now the civil service system gives a mode of answering these questions. In this District, while the government is the creature of Congress and subject at any time to its control or to its criticism, it is not such a branch of the general government as would bring it within the purview of the Civil Service law. For many years the teachers in the grades of our public schools have been appointed upon merit wholly. The graduates of our normal school are appointed teachers in the order of their standing in that school. Teachers who have the right to teach because they have passed the examinations, and hold certificates, are appointed in the order of their standing at the examination. As a result we have good schools and capable teachers. The commissioners have worked unaided, and enforced a kind of Civil Service system in other respects. They have during the past months held examinations of their own for various positions—for policemen, for clerical positions, and for technical positions of some kinds. They have done the best they could. But we have no funds at our command for such a purpose, and we want you to aid us. You will do so by helping to place us within the strong protection of the law passed by the American Congress, and approved by the President of the United States, giving us the duty as well as the right to have civil service examinations. And this is all the more necessary because every other department of the United States Government is under that protection. What is the result ? Our poor little District Government the resort of every man who wants a place, and of every influential government official who asks to have his friends appointed. The result is many times an absolute interruption of the public business. I believe that even the Members and Senators themselves will gladly coöperate to this end. Nobody knows better than they do that what is called “patronage” is a source of weakness and of danger rather than of strength. No one knows better than they that every appointing officer in every appointment is likely to make, in the words of the old saying “Ten enemies and one ingrate.”

Now I beg your pardon for bringing a matter so personal as this to your attention, and I beg to express to you the pleasure we feel in the fact that you have selected our city for your meeting place. I know the character of your local committees, and their ability to entertain you, and I doubt not that you will be so entertained that when you leave for your homes it will be with the desire to come again to your own capital city.

# The Appointment and Tenure of Postmasters.

BY RICHARD HENRY DANA.

It is a curious fact about our so-called "American" Spoils system in politics, that we spoil not a distant enemy, nor even some other race living in our midst, as the Turks do the Armenians, but we despoil ourselves in making spoils of our own institutions. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the postal service of the United States.

Our post-office department is the largest department in the country, and on its efficient management depends much of our material and intellectual progress as well as our daily convenience, and yet we have been letting our representatives strengthen their political fences by making frequent changes and unfit appointments, in a way that would ruin any business exposed to open competition. As a result, we have the worst postal service of any civilized country in the world. In Tokio, Japan, they had quite recently more frequent deliveries than in New York City, and there are improvements adopted in England, France, Germany and Italy twenty and thirty years ago which we have not yet adopted at all, or only partially and imperfectly. For example, in the large cities of those countries there are numerous branch offices, so numerous as to be for all practical purposes as accessible as letter boxes with us, where stamps or money orders can be bought, where parcels can be weighed, and where matter can be mailed. When with us a note is dropped into a letter box, there it lies untouched for one, two or three hours, till the collector takes it out, and it is not assorted till the collector deposits it at the post-office. When, however, it is mailed in one of these branch offices abroad, it is immediately cancelled and assorted, so that the time which would be wasted in the letter box, is utilized and the note is ready for direct delivery at the first call of the carrier.

This expedites the local city deliveries, so that a note mailed at a branch office is delivered almost as quickly as if sent by a private special messenger, and this again so stimulates the local use of the mails that the extra expense is reported to be more than made up by the increased sale of postage stamps.

For some twenty years or more we did nothing towards adopting this plan, and not only was all the time lost while the mail was waiting in the letter box, but a letter posted within half a mile of its destination often had to be carried two, three, or even four miles to the central office to be assorted, and then to travel all the way back, going over perhaps eight miles in all to accomplish a half a mile. We have very tardily adopted in some of our largest cities a few branch offices, but so few and far between that they do not half serve their purpose.

This is only one of numerous instances that could be cited to illustrate how much our postal system has been spoiled.

Not only in detail has it been thus spoiled, but so much have the postmasters-general and their assistants been occupied with the distribution of patronage that they have not had the time to attend to the organization of the department.

For example, a business man appointed postmaster General writes to some of the model postmasters to consult with him on the business of the service. On account of the pressure of Congressmen he is unable to fix a date before the June after his inauguration in March, but even then these model postmasters get no further than his ante-room, where they vainly wait many valuable hours, while the office-seekers, under the wing of members of Congress, pass in before them. At last, after about a week of waiting, one of these model postmasters gets into the inner room, and finds the Postmaster General engaged in a discussion with a negro postmaster of a small town in the South over the question whether the appointment should not be revoked, not on the ground of unfitness, but because of a rumor that this negro had once attended a Democratic caucus. After some quarter of an hour consumed over this question, so vastly important to the postal service, the Postmaster-General has a moment or two to shake hands and explain that the business consultation must be postponed till the next August, as he is overwhelmed with the pressure for places. This story I tell not as illustrating the

work of any one man, but of the heretofore usual duties of this cabinet position in general.

As a result, the organization of the department is on the same basis that it was under Franklin, when there were 75 post-offices in the country. When ordinary business grows large it is subdivided. The express companies, for example, are divided into districts, with a superintendent for each. So with the great railroads and with the post-offices in Great Britain; so with an army. But in the United States postal service there is nothing between the bureau at Washington and the postmasters. It is like an army with no majors, no colonels, no brigadier generals; in fact, with no officers between the general-in-chief with his staff and the captains of companies.

All the questions relating to the wants of the various postmasters have practically to be passed on by two clerks at Washington, who are too far off to be able to judge of the circumstances. Apparently they have to decide by lot in most cases, granting one-fourth or one-eighth of the requests, as it may be, in proportion to the appropriation. For example, from the Boston post-office is sent a request for a New England Directory; price \$7.50. The request is denied. As a consequence a clerk at a salary of \$750 a year has to be detailed to make out a list of names needing further addresses, go out and look over the directories belonging to some business men, as a favor, and bring back the desired addresses, to the great loss of money to the office and delay to the re-addressed letters.

Again, here are two towns, one 25 and the other 29 miles from Boston, and about four miles apart, with railroad connection between them. The letters from one to the other are sent all the way to Boston, there to be assorted and sent back to the other town, taking on an average about a day and a half. There is much correspondence between the two places. Who is to make the short cut?

The only persons officially charged with changing the routes are in Washington. They have no idea of the merits of the case. The postmasters of these two towns may write to Washington, but it is supererogation on their part if they do, and they are usually told, in reply, to attend to their own business. The only way to have the change made is for the

prominent men of both towns to bring pressure to bear on the department and to make the life of their Congressman miserable till, after perhaps two years of agitation, at a great personal sacrifice, the change is at last made.

Indeed it is one of the greatest tributes possible to the versatility and natural business talent of the American people that amid all these frequent political changes of postmasters and this utter want of organization the business of the department is carried on at all.

That the people of the United States do not rise and demand a better service is because they have not seen any better, and do not know of the possibilities of a really good post-office department. It is only a small portion of the small minority who travel abroad that have intelligently observed and compared our postal system and that of other civilized countries.

Let us only hope that the future historian may not judge our present advancement in civilization and intelligence by the workings of the greatest of our national departments. If any proof is required that it is the spoils system which has spoiled our postal service, it is to be found in the records of the railway mail service. For a number of years there has been kept a separate account of the number of pieces correctly distributed in that branch of the service and the number of errors. During the twelve months covered by the last year of the administration of President Arthur, following a previous Republican administration, in neither of which was the railway mail service looted, though the appointments were confessedly political, the number of correct distributions to one error had reached the high number of 5,575. On the incoming of the Cleveland administration many removals were made on political grounds, and the record fell to 3,364, rising again to nearly 4,000, after the men had got used to their work, in the last year of his administration. On the incoming of the Harrison administration, as all will remember, the railway mail service was looted, and that with unprecedented rapidity of removals, as the civil service law was to go into operation a few months after the inauguration. As a result, the number of correct distributions fell to 2,834 to each error, the lowest number on record. Since then the railway mail has been under civil service rules. In two years it reached

the highest previous record, the next year passed it, last year came up to 7,831, and this year (1895) to the truly wonderful record of 8,894. To fortify these telling statistics let me quote from the language of the General Superintendent of the Railway Mail Service\* the following: "The civil service laws and regulations as applied to the Railway Mail Service accomplish all the most sanguine expected. The eligibles for appointment who have been certified and selected excel in the fundamental qualities, such as suitable age, good physical condition and habits, activity and retentiveness of memory, and prospective growth and length of useful service.

Having such desirable undeveloped material to work upon, the management experience less difficulty in molding it into well-disciplined, industrious, thoughtful, efficient clerks. A much larger per cent. of the probationers succeed in earning permanent appointments, and under the system of development which obtains in the service, they continue to improve during their connection with it; and, as opportunities occur, are advanced in class according to their merits. In the judgment of this office, the present efficiency could not have been obtained under any other method."

Again, the record in the post-offices outside of the railway mail tells the same story. It is well remembered how rapidly the official heads of the postmasters fell under the axe of the headsman Mr. Clarkson. As a result, the number of complaints the next year increased 36 per cent., and the number of "losses chargeable to carelessness or depredation of postal employees" increased 64 per cent., according to the official reports.†

Important as are efficiency and economy in our vast postal business, yet these are not the subjects that concern us most. Were they the only issues, we should not be here. It is because of the corrupting influence of the spoils system on our politics and the danger to our liberties that so many busy persons annually meet to discuss the reform of our civil service. In no branch is the danger to our liberties so great as in the postal service. It composes more than half of our whole civil list. There are over 70,000 postmasters, or about one to every 130 voters; and if every postmaster can muster five friends,

\* Report P. M. Gen'l 1894, p. 395.

† Reports of the Postmaster General, 1889, p. 167, and 1890, pp. 177 and 179.



they together make 420,000, one in 29 voters, or a clear majority of all persons taking an active part in our nominating machinery. The postmasters, being scattered in every village and hamlet in the country, are from their situation more useful in manipulating delegates to large conventions than the same number of employees gathered together in one or two places. As to corruption, we have seen the bargaining of postmaster-ships at conventions in trade for votes of delegates, to say nothing of selling them by Congressmen or defeated candidates for Congress of the dominant party for ready money.

We give special welcome, therefore, to the messenger bringing us news that the postmasterships, or any number of them, have permanently been fortified against the raids of the Kurdish-like spoilsmen, and the recent order of the President has a peculiar and almost absorbing interest; it cheers the heart and brings hope to the breast.

Those, who have given special attention for several years past to the possible ways of bringing postmasters under the reform system, agree that if the plan contemplated in this order is carried out we shall have the most important, if not the greatest in number, of the postmasters taken out of politics, and incidentally the business organization of the postal department greatly improved.

In 1889 I read a paper before this League on the subject, "The Post-Offices to be Taken out of Politics." The plan I suggested was, first, dividing the country into postal districts, with a superintendent over each; next, appointing the presidential postmasters by way of promotion of other postmasters or of postal employees within the classified service of the district, putting all fourth class postmasters with a salary above \$500. under civil service rules, and for the rest of the places, with lower salaries, to make the declaration by law or executive order that neither removals nor appointments should be made on political grounds, allowing no removals except after a hearing and on the reports of post-office inspectors who were then as now under civil service rules, and that appointments should be made under regulations substantially like those incorporated in what has since been called the Lodge Bill for the appointment of fourth-class postmasters.

The plan now proposed by the President and Postmaster General is to consolidate as far as possible neighboring offices

with larger ones, as has been so successfully done in Boston and its vicinity, only including many more post-offices, so that all the post-offices in the eastern part of Massachusetts, for example, should be part of the Boston office. In this way the districting of the post-offices is largely effected. Next, all the offices thus consolidated, including the postmasters of the annexed offices, who will henceforward be superintendents, are by the order put under civil service rules. In this way most of those who have heretofore been presidential postmasters of the second and third classes will be appointed by promotion, and the lower positions will be filled by competitive examination conducted by the civil service commission.

By making the postmasters of the subordinate offices into superintendents, our old enemy, the four-year law of 1820, is shorn of more than half its power for ill, for second and third class presidential postmasters made up more than half of all the officers to whom the law applied.

One difficulty, however, still remains, and that is to decide how to treat the fourth-class postmasters with small salaries. In order to understand the situation, it must be remembered that of the 66,500 fourth-class postmasters the average salary is only \$167 a year, and about 47,000 have a salary of under \$200.

If a clerk with a salary of \$750 a year were substituted for each fourth-class postmaster, it would cost the department \$39,000,000 a year. By the new order, however, the difficulty seems to be less than it would be under the operation of the Lodge Bill alone. If any fourth-class post-office, consolidated under the order has too small a salary to invite competition, it can be treated just as some other places for which there is no competition are now treated under the civil service rules. If no persons apply for a competitive examination for a position, then none is held, and a pass one is substituted. (Clause 7, section 2, of the civil service law.) The only precaution necessary is not to allow promotion from positions so filled without an examination which is competitive, so as to prevent a well known way of evading the law. This point seems to be at least partly covered by the civil service rules now in force. (General Rule III., clause 2 (c), and Postal Rule 2, clause 6). But I believe many persons would apply for competition for a position under this order, with its possible promotion ahead,

who would never do so for the place alone by itself. But few would care to embark in a small boat to cross the ocean, with the additional risk of being tipped out on purpose when not quarter through the voyage, but many will gladly get in a small boat to be rowed to a larger vessel, with a good chance of staying aboard the latter till transferred to still larger.

Again, it must be remembered that many fourth-class postmasters are allowed to supplement their salaries by keeping a store or by being a clerk in a store in which the office is situated, just as is the case with some of the smaller consulates. Indeed, it is the custom the post-office brings to the store that gives the post-office its chief value in many small towns.

Under the order and proposed plan of extensive consolidation we shall have some 3,000 presidential post-offices taken out of the operation of the four-year-term law, and these, together with their subordinates and perhaps at first 5,000 fourth-class postmasters, and later possibly 20,000 more, put under civil service rules. Every one who enters at the lower grades knows he has entered a profession where he may, by faithful and able work, rise to the head of a large consolidated post-office, and we also get a substantial subdivision of the post-offices into districts, with a head postmaster in charge of each.

This is a most important gain. It will eventually bring under civil service rules twice as many new positions as were originally classified when the Pendleton Bill was passed.

On the basis of the present national civil service, the additions under this order will make the whole classified service nearly if not more than one-half the whole civil list.

With this it seems the back of the spoils monster is broken, and it only remains for us to complete the work in good fashion.

To complete the work as far as the post-office department is concerned, for the places above the scope of the present plan the four-year law should be repealed either by law or in substance by establishing an executive custom of reappointing the postmasters at the head of these consolidated offices on the expiration of their terms and filling vacancies among these postmasters by promotion, and also by putting all the positions except those of Postmaster General and his private secretary within the classified service, and, for the places below the

scope of this present order, namely, the scattered fourth-class offices with small salaries, too distant from a large office to be consolidated, I should apply the principles of the Lodge Bill\* for selection of applicants; and to that I should add that no removals should be made except after giving the postmaster notice of the charges and a chance to be heard, and only on the report of the inspector or other official before whom the hearing took place. By the official report of an "off year" for political changes (1887), it appears that more than one-half the removals were made on reports of inspectors. Why not require that all removals should be made on official reports? Suspension during investigation would cover all cases of need of immediate procedure on account of criminal acts.

When all this is done, and when some more extensions in other departments, now contemplated which, I am informed, will include some 17,000 more places, have been made, we may know that not only is the back of the spoils monster broken, but that the work of extermination is practically completed, and we may prepare to attend the funeral obsequies, keeping, however, our eye open all the while and our hand at the sword hilt, lest some hydra head spring to life again.

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\* H. R. Doc., No. 7707, 51st Congress, 1st session.

# The Important Function of Civil Service Reform.

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By F. L. SIDDONS.

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As the movement known as Civil Service Reform gains in the respect and good-will of the American people, and its principles are extended to the various forms of government that exist in this Republic, civil service reformers and friends of good government generally must of necessity busy themselves with the many details involved in the labor of giving legal expression and effect to those principles, which this organization, in a large degree, stands for and represents. But their zeal in the labor alluded to is greatly misapprehended if it is supposed that it is inspired only by the conviction that the system of examining applicants for admission to, or promotion in, the Government service, to test their efficiency, is superior to the old method, which made party or personal reasons alone the "open sesame" to Government employment. For irrational, unjust, and quite indefensible as the old method was, and, alas! still is, it would not in itself, and merely because it was and is irrational and unjust as a method of supplying Government servants, have earned for itself the undying hostility of so many who count country above party and justice above the supposed requirements of political obligation.

No! Back of a mere method of how persons should get into or out of Government service lie questions of far greater moment to the welfare of the country. Questions that indeed claim the anxious thoughts of every lover of our institutions, and upon a right answer to which much of consequence to America depends.

Let us for a moment consider them.

It can hardly be denied that a Government organized upon the theory of the consent of the governed, and which derived all its powers and functions from the people whom it is to protect and rule, must depend for its success and permanence upon the freedom and ease with which its citizens are permitted to give expression to their wishes and desires, and their "consent" obtained in all matters concerning their social and political well-being. It has long been our boast that the United States of America afford to the world a striking example of such a government—a government quickly responding to the needs and aspirations of its people, and knowing no claims but those of equal justice to all within the sphere of its jurisdiction. This is our boast. But can we make it good?

Review the political history of the country for the past seventy years with unbiased minds and we must frankly confess that some of our most cherished institutions have become mere delusions. Who believes to-day that a single important elective office is filled by the free choice of the electors? Who doubts that much of the most needed legislation must be *purchased*, if obtainable at all? And to whom must the people go for permission to elect their servants or to procure the enactment of their laws? To organized bands of political freebooters or to single individuals who have reached a position of political power quite inexplicable, when their education, honesty or ability are borne in mind. What an extraordinary spectacle is presented when a great city is completely dominated for years by a little coterie of ignorant men, who turn out to be, as was long suspected, common thieves, and when the first flood of public indignation has ebbed after engulfing the rogues, the same metropolis in a little while is again in the possession of another set of equally ignorant and corrupt individuals, who, more daring than their predecessors, extend their evil influence and control until a State is in their hands, and they reach up and out for larger spoil. How comes this about? The answer is at hand. By a systematic debauching of the political conscience of the electors. By appeals to their ignorance, cupidity or necessities. *By the bribe of office.* How many leaders of movements for the public good have been tempted and fallen and their cause betrayed by the snare of public place set in their pathway by

those who held the key to what has been aptly called a "vast bribery chest." And bribery such as this is not checked by Australian ballot laws or proportional representation.

To destroy the "bribery chests," the one hope of the political striker and boss; to restore the freedom of speech and political action of the voter; to make our public servants truly the servants of the public; to clear the way for those industrial and economic reforms made necessary by the greatly changed industrial and economic conditions of the country; in fine to make our government, in its best and truest sense, "a government of the people," is the *important function* of Civil Service Reform.

# Results of Recent Agitation of Consular Service Reform. Their Value. What Next?

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BY JONATHAN A. LANE,

*Ex-President of the Boston Merchants' Association.*

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The invitation, Mr. President, and gentlemen of the National Civil Service League, to take some small part in a discussion of the Consular Service at this, your annual gathering, in the capital of the nation, is something from which the average business man may becomingly shrink. We look to you as men who represent the scholar in public affairs, who unite with patriotic purpose the legal and learned attainments which enable you to present your views in such a, perhaps, academic way, that you command the attention of educated and thinking men at home and abroad. You will, therefore, considerately accept from us only such a way of treating the subject as we are accustomed to in our business and home circles. And also we may be allowed to suggest also that so far as we have anything to say we shall deem it wise to consider mainly the present condition of things in regard to this important part of the great civil service of the country.

The recent agitation directed to this particular cause was begun about two years ago in the city of Boston—it has since been vigorously prosecuted in all sorts of ways in all our country and unmistakably it has produced results. What are they? What is their value? What next?

## ACTION OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

While the recent action of the State Department has been widely, and I think in general favorably regarded by the press of the country, it does not occur to me that any commercial body has taken specific action thereon except the Boston



Merchants' Association, whose early interest in the subject made it quite proper they should do so. And at the meeting of the Board of Directors in November the following votes were adopted:

" That the Boston Merchants' Association appreciate and approve the recent action of the Department of State as announced and published in Consular Reports Oct. 4.

" That the communication to the President by Richard Olney, Secretary of State, upon 'which this action was based,' does great credit to our fellow-citizen, who, in this transaction, represents the best political sentiments of Massachusetts and of the country.

" That the order of President Cleveland that hereafter vacancies in the Consular service below a certain grade shall be filled by the appointment of persons who, by present or past service, or by proper examination, have in character and capacity shown their fitness, is an important step in the right direction; and, while it is not a surrender by the Chief Executive of the nation of his constitutional prerogatives, it should inaugurate a better system of appointments—one which will give to the Consular service a stability and usefulness it does not now possess.

" That this initial action on the part of the Administration will achieve its best results when the Department of State in conjunction, it may be with the War Department, to which largely all Consular reports are referred, shall have such a 'digest' made of every Consular post as has been recommended in reports emanating from this body and from the National Board of Trade, and has otherwise been made known to the State Department. We do not understand that such action would call for any legislation by Congress or involve any great cost beyond what is usual in the service, and it is conceded by those who have duly considered it that such full and correct information of the requirements and possibilities of every field to which our Representatives are sent would be invaluable to the Administration in making its appointments and to our Consuls in the discharge of their chief duty, which is to protect and extend the commercial interests of the country they represent.

" That such action as we recommend, supplementing that already taken, will make a new epoch in the history of our Consular service, will open new fields to American enterprise, strengthen our national resources, advance the nation's honor, and give to the Administration which shall have secured it a high place in the records of our national growth and prosperity."

These views are a declaration of recent results which are of great interest, and are also an expression of their value—together with a recommendation of what in the judgment of the Boston association should follow. It is quite possible this league may not fit all in the same favorable light. I will name some of the considerations which had influence with us.

The communication to the President by the Secretary of State contained the admission of that for which we have contended, "That if our Consular service were what it should be, and our officials chosen for their fitness for the duties to be discharged by them, the result to the trade and commerce of the country would be of the most favorable character as is supported by the practice and experience of Great Britain and other countries."

We believe this declaration from the State Department will command attention in every commercial port in the world, and it will be felt that at last our government is getting its eyes open. Every able and useful American Consul will rejoice at the attitude his country has taken, and will become greatly interested in the methods which the Government will speedily apply to correct existing evils in the matter of appointments and length of service. Every public servant abroad who holds his office with utter indifference to and contempt of everything except the political influence which gave him his place, will begin to see "the handwriting on the wall"—a new light shining amidst the semi-obscurity which has so long reigned, and it may constrain him to become a better public servant at once, while there is time, or to prepare to get out.

Again we are grateful that while considerate reference is made to the recent attempts of Congress to reform the service, it is admitted that the Executive branch of the Government should "most naturally take the initial step." This is what we have always felt to be the wiser way. It must be a matter of doubt and uncertainty to what extent a constitutional right can be circumscribed or abridged. The President's oath of office binds him to fidelity in his appointments, and the Senate has the right to reject them. In any new departure, by which this system is to be radically changed, should not the will of the Executive go before? If he stands in the way there can be no progress. If he leads the way, there may be all we require! Again, this action of the President and his Secretary of State, makes distinct reference to the civil service act which authorizes the President to prescribe rules for the admission of persons into the civil service of the United States, and is unmistakably an effort to get the Consular service onto the same footing. If this candidate for admission into our politi-

cal church is not disposed, as a condition therefor, to be immersed, and is willing to be well sprinkled with civil service reform principles and methods, it would seem to be good policy to take him in, in the hope that later he will fill all the conditions, and get in all over!

And what is perhaps best of all, Secretary Olney admits that the order he recommends "is in no sense final or exhaustive. Experience is to show in what respect it may be amended or enlarged—that it will be a step in the right direction—and a step to be judged of, not by the advance itself makes, but by the advance it may rightly be expected inevitably to lead to."

These words redeem this action from some of its defects, and plainly indicate a spirit and purpose on the part of this Administration to bring us at length to a Consular service which shall not be inferior to that of any nation, and, recalling the past, justifies our exclamation that Massachusetts in Secretary Olney has redeemed herself, and that both the President and his Secretary of State deserve the thanks of all civil service reformers and good citizens.

#### CONTRARY VIEWS CONSIDERED.

But, as I have already intimated, these views and conclusions are not entertained by everybody. A leading citizen of Boston, hearing that at the time being in Washington, I had expressed to Mr. Olney satisfaction at so much of what the department had done as was then published, called my attention to an editorial in the New York Journal of Commerce—by no means a Republican organ—which condemned the whole scheme as insincere and worthless, and which my friend approved as conclusive and correct.

I suppose the New York members of this body will recall this criticism. It was published Sept. 26, and was entitled "Attempted Reform of Consular Appointments."

It proceeds to show "that it only includes a part of the service—with vital modifications of the civil service—the appointing power remains the selecting power, which is the essence of the spoils system, the rules promulgated are made for the President's own guidance, and the matter remains where it always has been in the executive discretion. What is wan-

ted is a President who will refrain from making a clean sweep, and who will not wait till he has filled all the places with his own partisans before he invokes the merit system for the protection of the service."

I think it is true that a serious defect exists in the order of the Secretary of State creating the Board of Examiners. This is composed of three persons, entirely within the State Department. If in this respect it had conformed to the Morgan Senate bill of 1894, which provides "that the President shall appoint a board, consisting of five members, who are to be the Civil Service Commission and two officers of the State Department," it would have been such a recognition of the United States Civil Service Board as would have gratified that body and the public generally. It certainly would disarm largely such criticisms as I have cited. I think I am justified, however, in saying that Mr. Olney has some doubts as to the composition of this board, for in his order he says: "Such changes in the membership thereof as experience may prove to be desirable will be dealt with by additional regulations as occasion may require." It would, therefore, be quite in order for this league or the National Board of Trade, or for Congress, in any bill, to endeavor to secure this needed change as something that will greatly advance the contemplated reform and greatly encourage all who feel the importance of sustaining the United States Civil Service Commission and its cause.

But after all it would seem as if the gravamen of this sweeping condemnation is "that the Chief Executive of the nation is still at the head in this business, he will do about what he pleases and the matter remains where it always has been—there is practically no change."

#### VIEWS OF HON. O. S. STRAUS.

Perhaps some of you may remember a well guarded paragraph in the instructive address of Hon. O. S. Straus, ex-Minister to Turkey, a year ago before this body, as follows:

"The Constitution provides that the President shall nominate and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls. It is evident no Congressional enactment can abrogate this constitutional right of the President and perhaps cannot abridge it. The result is possible that any regula-

lation made by the President could be entirely ignored by his successor. This fact, however, need not discourage us, for if a President will at the 'outset' of his term adopt regulations for reforming the service and make his appointments accordingly it may be perhaps assumed that public opinion will influence and sustain his successor in following the same course."

The wisdom of these words will not be disputed.

#### PRESIDENTIAL PREROGATIVES.

The President of the United States by his high office inherits the privilege of these appointments. Under no other limitations or restrictions than his oath of office and the approval of that potential body, the Senate, which very naturally has come into a sort of joint proprietorship in this patronage, by virtue of its authority and power therein. At the "outset" of Mr. Cleveland's Administration, we may perhaps admit conditions were not favorable—the pressure upon the President was very great, and the Department of State was not manned as it is to-day. Therefore no such action as we are discussing did take place. Now, then, I would respectfully submit for the consideration of this body to what extent should the present incumbent of the Presidential office, under these circumstances make rules and regulations concerning the Consular service, which would seem to circumscribe and abridge the privileges and the inherited rights of his successor? Of course it is intended that this policy shall be transmitted to the next Administration, otherwise it would not, or should not, have been entered upon—and upon that excellent rule, good in affairs both national and personal, which in some sense here unite—"put yourself in his place."

Is Mr. Cleveland to be condemned by considerate, fair-minded men for going no further in these rules than he felt it was becoming and proper for his Administration to go? He reserves Consulships above the salary of \$2500, for which this New York critic also condemns him. What limitation would this editor suggest, if any? And why not, with equal propriety, demand that he should have gone as far as the Morgan bill in a reformation of the Consular and Diplomatic service? Mr. Cleveland has gone slow in this movement, which, it is to be confessed, is quite in contrast with the too rapid gait which characterized his changes in the Consular

service at the beginning of his Administration. It remains for his successor, the incoming President, to show the country that the opportunity reserved for him to make further extension of the civil service system and to do much more, and to do it better, will be eagerly embraced, and that Mr. Straus' admirable suggestion—that it be done at the outset of the succeeding Administration—will not be forgotten! The party in power, which shall in this business take the most liberal non-partisan stand, will earn the lasting gratitude as well as the admiration of the country.

#### WHAT CONGRESSIONAL ACTION NEXT.

What next? is that part of our topic which, no doubt, will the most engage your interest and create the most discussion. A year ago we were all looking to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and the press and commercial bodies were commending the Morgan bill, in which the junior Senator from Massachusetts was greatly interested. Of course, then, the Administration had made no sign, and we knew nowhere else to turn. The report of the Committee of the National Board of Trade in January last, with some hesitation and an inadequate discussion (for the Senate bill to which I have referred was, as finally agreed upon, reported so late that it was impossible to consider it) did recommend such Congressional action as the bill embodied, leaving it to be perfected afterward. It was felt that any bill which promised to take the Consular service out of the "spoils system" must be worth something to the country and the cause, and such was the judgment of our friend, Mr. Roosevelt. Therefore, hoping against hope, and knowing the fate of all bills of this kind in the past, we have urged its passage at that or a succeeding Congress.

This initial action of the President has, however, altered the situation. With the slight change I have suggested in the Board of Examiners, it would seem as if the Consular Service might be lifted at once to a higher level, and the necessity does not exist, as it did, for immediate legislation of such a sweeping character as has been contemplated by Senators Morgan and Lodge. There is certainly more reason and opportunity for calm and considerate action than there was,

and the increased uncertainty of any legislation being accomplished in this direction by the present Congress is likely to give us time to see if something better cannot be done. I find the impression is very strongly and widely entertained that Congress does not at the present time, in view of the great civil and commercial changes which are taking place in the world, know enough about the Consular Service of the United States—what it is called upon to do, what it is possible for it to do under present conditions, wherein it is at a disadvantage in the same field with the representatives of other nations and what should be done at once to place it upon an equal footing with them. Pertinent to these investigations will come the question of such a compensation to the United States representative as shall correspond to the service required. We think in this respect there should be a new deal all around, so that it shall not be charged that we are making great demands in regard to the quality of the service we are to receive and quite neglect to follow the simplest rules of justice and right in regard to the equivalent therefor. If the Consular Service is “business,” it should be paid on business principles, and the Government “is penny wise and pound foolish” in not demanding in places, too numerous to mention, the best talent and qualifications and paying for them accordingly.

#### VIEWS OF HON. J. R. LEESON.

The Hon. J. R. Leeson, my successor as President of the Boston Merchants' Association, has been abroad this summer as one of a board of Commissioners appointed by Gov. Greenhalge to investigate the subject of public ownership of docks. They visited seventeen ports in Great Britain and Northern Europe, and Mr. Leeson took special pains to get all the information he had time to get concerning the Consular Service at these seventeen important posts. They were all apparently well manned and all these Consuls were found to be greatly interested and well-informed as to what was being done here to improve the service. Mr. Leeson had a chance to see the conditions under which they were required to do their work, and to contrast it with the pay rendered in this country for corresponding services, and the pay received by British Consuls at the same port, and he returned with very positive views

on the whole subject, which I do not wish to anticipate too much, as Mr. Leeson is a delegate to the National Board of Trade, which meets in Washington next month, where the subject will be discussed as it was a year ago.

#### VIEWS OF HON. P. A. COLLINS.

Our Consul General in London, Gen. Collins, in an interview with Mr. Leeson, was strong in the conviction that Congress should look into the whole business before it undertakes to pass such a bill as that I have referred to. Wise legislation is always supposed to be based upon complete information, and this information we do not now possess.

#### CONGRESSIONAL COMMISSION.

I am aware that the suggestion of an able Congressional Commission, composed of three from the House, two from the Senate and two from citizens generally, would not be granted cheerfully or at once. But such a body of men, all of them carefully selected for their fitness and fidelity to make such an investigation, is recommended by those who have given the subject much thought, and it could not fail to be worth all it would cost to Congress and the country. We believe that President Cleveland would make such appointments in this case as would be satisfactory to the country, and ensure the best results from the Administration which shall follow him.

#### SENATOR HENRY CABOT LODGE.

In this connection we venture to express the hope that the junior Senator from Massachusetts—who has spent the summer in Europe, visiting many places—has taken equal pains with my friend in Boston to study the Consular system, at least to some extent, on the ground, where its good and its evil are alike laid bare to the observation of such a student of men and measures as Mr. Lodge's career shows him to be. We think it would help him and us to determine "what next" is needed in this cause.

But you will have observed, gentlemen, that the Boston Merchants' Association makes a very positive recommendation—one which it has urged before—that the State and



Treasury Departments shall, without delay, have made a complete digest of the United States Consulates. This does not mean an expensive, though valuable, commission, nor a Consular inspection, which, as they are ordinarily created, have been of a value less than any cost, whether great or small, which they incur. To express the purpose of a digest in easy terms, we might fairly call it "a still hunt in the Consular field, which will bag more game for the outlay than can be got in any other way," and which we have specially favored because it seemed to be so entirely within the reach and range of the State and Treasury Departments. One of the definitions of this term "digest" so admirably fits this case that we prefer it to any other—"to get an understanding of; to comprehend."

We claim that the Departments of State and of the Treasury, while they have Consular reports in stacks and by the cord, have not reduced to ready use and properly and methodically classified and arranged such knowledge of the chief Consulates, their duties, their conditions and their possibilities, as a good business policy would demand and as would be invaluable in determining the fitness and requirements of the appointee. It is a lamentable fact that oftentimes the applicant for such service is obliged to look abroad for information as to what will be required of him, and were this information available at headquarters, Washington, it would serve often either to deter him from a service for which he was entirely disqualified or to stimulate the applicant either to fit himself for this post or to take one within the range of his capabilities.

We expect Consuls to exercise a wise supervision and judgment upon all invoices to which they give their official approval as to value, etc. How can this be done in a port from which there are large exportations of textile and other fabrics when the Consul is entirely ignorant of all such merchandise, and, by his experience and training is utterly incapable of having any opinion or influence in the matter of values?

In these days of ad valorem duties the loss to the Government in not having valuations looked into and criticised, where they are made solely in the interests of the foreign manufacturer, is not easily estimated. There can be no doubt it would a hundred-fold exceed the cost of any such looking into the business of these various ports as our scheme for a digest involves. And again what are the opportunities

of extending American commerce in such places? It will be found that the American Consul in some ports has done a great deal in this way, and that in others he is not only indifferent, but is almost a stumbling block in the way. The work of our Consuls should be weighed and measured in this regard, as the great business establishments of this country measure the value of the service of their heads of departments by the results accomplished. Uncle Sam is doing business in all parts of the world, and our Consuls are his representatives, and, in some sense, heads of departments in the fields assigned them. If they do not improve their opportunities to the extent of a reasonable possibility, they are not desirable public servants. If they do, it should be recognized and rewarded.

#### HOW TO SECURE A DIGEST.

But we must hasten on to this next thought:—How to make the digest. How can such a collection of all the facts and conditions which attach to every important Consular post be thus collated, condensed and made to serve the object we aim at? It can be done by first finding the man, and then by quietly sending him to do the work. He may be some very able Consul or Consul General in the service. He may be one who has been in the service for a considerable term of years, during which he has illustrated in his own career that fitness required for this special service. We need not say that he should possess the qualities of thoroughness, independence, impartiality and an admirable discretion. That he should know European languages; that he should have the entrée into the best commercial and social circles by virtue of his personal fitness and reputation; that he should be a first-class man of business and of affairs; know about goods, wares and merchandise and their values at home and abroad; that he should possess no partisan spirit whatever, and be solely animated by a desire and purpose to put the Consular Service of this country, by a complete knowledge of all facts relating thereto on such an elevation as it has never known. All this at a cost to the department so inconsiderable as to call for no special appropriation or legislation.

It could be done by detaching such a party from his post, and detailing him to this service as a part of those con-

tingent expenses which are usual, and which are provided for in both the State and Treasury Departments, and even were Congress to create and make the needful appropriation for such a commission as we have just suggested, there would be a great deal of preliminary discussion and delay, during which the preparation of the digest might go steadily on. Its value to the departments interested can hardly be computed, and in any subsequent looking into this great and important service by a commission or anybody else, this digest would serve as a foundation or base for all future action.

#### THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

The reference which the President makes to this subject in his message is of course in accord with the recent action of the State Department. He repeats that the importance of the subject has led the Executive to consider what steps might properly be taken—without additional legislation—which steps he has taken, not assuming that what has been done will prove a full measure of Consular reform. What chiefly interests us is the added declaration by the President that these efforts should be immediately supplemented by legislation providing for Consular inspection to begin with, and a Consular inspection to be followed up in a thorough manner.

This is in entire harmony with all that this paper recommends and suggests. We admit that we do not like the term "Consular inspection," for the reason that while it may be most fitting in itself, and is precisely what our rival nations do, yet with us the favored appointee has simply had a dignified and pleasant outing and exchange of hospitalities with our Consuls abroad, and any such thing as a thorough scrutiny of the entire service in this way we have not known. To get out of these old ruts and reach the result which Mr. Cleveland seeks—by a complete reconstruction and new departure—we decidedly prefer new names and new methods as well.

Certainly at the outset it would seem to be desirable to make an impression that something more, and a good deal more than ever before, is going to be done. But after all, whether it shall be a special commission or a complete digest, or a reinvigorated Consular inspection, the ends we aim at are one, and we must leave to those upon whom the responsi-

bility and duty rests to determine<sup>2</sup> the means by which the result which the President and the people alike seek shall be best and soonest attained.

#### CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, therefore, gentlemen, whether the "next thing" in this business shall be that the Senate, perhaps stimulated to effort by what the State Department has done, shall revive and revise its action of last winter in the complete success of which, by the passage of a bill through both houses, we have considerable doubt—or whether this Administration shall take other steps such as we have suggested, or wiser and better ones—it is plain enough that the cause which has assembled us here is moving steadily on, at a pace exceeding that to which Edmund Burke refers when he says that the "march of the human mind is slow."

Certainly in view of the political passion and prejudice which this cause has encountered from the beginning, the success which has crowned your efforts, Mr. President and those associated with you, has been surprising. Nevertheless I need not remind any one here that it still remains for us to continue the contest, in which we should not relax a single effort or abate one jot of our zeal and ardor in the good cause.

## Superannuation in the Civil Service.

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BY WILLIAM DUDLEY FOULKE.

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John Wanamaker, late Postmaster General, of happy memory, once wrote by the hand of Marshall Cushing a circular letter to a number of civil service reformers throughout the country asking why both parties should not discard their insincere professions for the law and have the patriotism to go back to the old system.

The devil himself can sometimes put an apposite question and this letter inquired what answer reformers made to the objections, that a civil pension list was the logical result of their system and that the efficiency of the departments would be seriously interfered with in ten or fifteen years by the old age of many of the clerks who could not be removed. It was easy to answer that these clerks ought to be dismissed when they ceased to be efficient. It was easy to say that when they accepted employment they knew that no pension awaited them and that it was their duty to save in the days of their prosperity enough to support them in the infirmities of age. It is still true that permanency in office-holding, which the merit system encourages, makes even discretionary removals more difficult, and as men everywhere outlive their usefulness, this so-called tenure during good behavior does sometimes fasten "barnacles" upon the service. I use the epithet of another high authority in the camp of our enemies, the late Mr. Porter, who conducted with such impartial and disinterested fidelity the taking of the last census.

The only objection of our opponents which ever had a grain of sense in it is that involved in characterizing civil service reform as "the Chinese system," namely its tendency to crystallization and rigidity. This tendency exists and safeguards are required to ensure flexibility and to maintain constantly that high efficiency which is secured at the outset by

competitive examinations. By these examinations we presumably bring into the service the best men for the places, but other devices are still required to see that these continue to be not only good men but the best men, so long as they remain in the employment of the government.

In the case of appointments we have seen how vain it is to trust the arbitrary discretion of the appointing power. The spoils system has been the outgrowth of that misplaced confidence. Personal and party considerations instead of the good of the service have dictated appointments. But the infirmities of human nature do not stop when the choice is once made, we have no stronger reason to believe that under a discretionary system the best men only will be retained than that the best men only will be appointed.

The competitive plan has indeed removed one great temptation. Men are not dismissed for the mere purpose of appointing to the vacant place a personal or partisan follower. But there are other temptations to retain the inefficient and some of these temptations spring from the best feelings of our nature. Men in prosperity do not always save up their earnings for the hour of need, and the man who has served faithfully for twenty years may find himself when no longer able to perform his duties in a position where dismissal would make him an outcast and a pauper. We may say, that the chief of the department or bureau ought not to consider this, that his duty is wholly to the State, that he must keep the best men only, and that if a clerk through the weight of years or infirmities becomes inefficient, he must be discharged. We may preach this sort of morality till doomsday, but no man with a heart will do it. Under the present system the government service will continue to be a refuge for the helpless where these have not forfeited their rights by any wilful act of their own. Many of those who are aged and incompetent, but who can point to a record of past usefulness, will stay in place and besides drawing pay for work which is not performed, they will injure the service in other ways. It was the old practitioner who most strenuously resisted the code. It is the old physician who is most reluctant to adopt the new methods recently revealed by science for the cure of disease and it is the old official who is often the greatest obstacle to renovation and reform in the public service. This proposition is too

plain for argument. Furthermore it is true that many a man, by mere length of service, comes to believe that he has an indefeasible right to his office. He becomes stubborn and opinionated. He is harder to manage than a new man. Even the judges of our Federal Courts sometimes become arbitrary and disagreeable largely on account of the life tenure upon which they hold their places. A certain insecurity in office is a great stimulus to urbanity, and politeness is an important virtue in public servants especially in those with whom the people are brought into daily contact.

Experience in office is valuable but sometimes enthusiasm is of ten-fold greater value and old age is not enthusiastic. In our great business organizations, our railroads, our banks, our manufactories, the necessity often arises for the infusion of fresh blood. The system of rotation in office every four years was very ridiculous, but because we have avoided Scylla we must not sail into Charybdis. Absolute fixity of tenure is also laden with disaster.

The problem to be solved is therefore to prescribe by some general system of rules an easy and sure method of discharging the incompetent, of providing for the superannuated and of maintaining the service in the highest state of efficiency. Part of this question can be solved, it is true, by a civil pension list. It has been thus solved in other countries, and the expense of such a list, great as it may be, is less than that of keeping incompetent men in the public service. But if we imagine that a civil pension list will, within the life of this generation, be approved by the American people let us speedily undeceive ourselves. The present pension rolls, men think, are long enough. The country will not add to them. Not one man in ten would vote for it. The sentiment of gratitude to our soldiers cannot be stretched far enough to embrace those in the occupations of civil life, no matter how long continued or meritorious their service. The people generally believe, however incorrectly, that these men have easy places and are well paid and multitudes of new applicants can always be found ready to assume their duties without this additional attraction. The people will see no reason why a new burden should thus be laid upon the government. If provision is to be made for the superannuated, the civil service itself which will receive the benefit must bear the burden. I

notice that a bill has been prepared by the Letter Carriers' Association for retaining in the Treasury two per cent. from the salary of every carrier for relief against disability by injuries sustained in the service and for annuities for those who have served twenty years and have become incapacitated. By this bill a carrier is not necessarily removed at the end of that time. He is simply allowed to retire on half pay. There would, however, be far less difficulty in removing him if he became inefficient. In the Fire and Police Departments in New York, Chicago and elsewhere, in the railway mail service, among schoolteachers and in other positions, arrangements have been made or proposed for superannuation funds of a similar character. The life, annuity and endowment tables furnish a basis from which the amount to be retained and the annuities to be paid can be determined with reasonable accuracy. The details can be easily adjusted. The greater the number of men embraced in such a measure the more beneficial will it be. A system comprehending the entire classified service would be the most perfect of all.

The next problem is to provide some plan by which the service may be kept from fossilization, even before the period when the members become entitled to the benefits of a superannuation fund, a plan by which some movement can be given to the individuals composing these various corps and by which the efficiency of every department, bureau and office can be maintained at its highest limit.

Now the methods used for this purpose will naturally be the same as those used to secure efficiency at the outset. Examination and probation are the two touchstones by which this is done. A periodical examination then and a constant record of efficiency are the means by which it can be determined what employees should be promoted, reduced in grade or dismissed.

Four years ago I submitted this matter in a communication to Mr. George William Curtis, proposing the following: "Let all grades of the service be open to promotion upon periodical competitive examinations. Let the term of the incumbent of any grade expire at the time of these examinations. Give him the right to re-appoint upon proving his efficiency in competition with all applicants from the grade immediately lower than his own. If any of these men understand how to



do his work better than he does himself, the best among them ought to have his place and he ought to go down to theirs. If he cannot hold his own even in the lowest grade, he ought to leave the service. It is evident that this system would inspire the same emulation among those who are in the service as among those who seek to enter it."

This communication was submitted by Mr. Curtis to the Executive Committee of the League. He wrote me that the difficulty with a general competition of different grades was that the clerk who had grown feeble and who ought to be displaced could easily beat any one not in his grade in competitive examination of actual details of review. That the reasons for his removal could hardly be detected by an examination, however evident they might be to observation. Mr. Curtis added: "It is agreed that the question is very important and several of our friends were plainly inclined to approve your suggestions of periodical examinations. We shall keep thinking." The suggestions made at that time ought to be modified in accordance with Mr. Curtis' criticism. A man's ability to advance or retain his grade should be determined not only by examination but also by a constant daily record of efficiency. At the end, say of every four years, let these examinations be made and let the daily record be produced, giving equal weight to each. Begin the examinations at the highest grade and proceed thus downward to the lowest. Let the efficient men of the lower grades move up a step, and let the inefficient men in the higher grades keep moving down a step at a time till they have found their level.

Four years have elapsed since this subject was submitted and nothing definite has been proposed by the League. It is time now not only to keep thinking but to transmute thought into action. The danger of fossilization grows greater year by year. The more the classified system is extended the more the "barnacles" will accumulate and dissatisfaction with a system which permits them will grow in a corresponding ratio. Now is the time for us to see to it that this last objection to our Reform is finally overcome. Let us remove the dead branches of the Civil Service wherever decay appears. The sap must continue to circulate and the foliage must retain its freshness that the tree may bear fruit in greater and greater abundance.

## The State of Civil Service Reform in the South.

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BY HERMAN JUSTI.

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When the letter of your Secretary was received asking me to give "the status of Civil Service Reform sentiment in the South," my first impulse was to decline the task, for the field appeared, not only vast, but uninviting. Some time ago, when one of our local wags was asked for his opinion of the financial condition of the people in a certain section of the South, he replied: "One half of the people are busted and the other half are insolvent." Now I am an ardent believer in the merit system, and yet, I, like many others, often grow impatient at the apathy and indifference of our people regarding this vital issue, and I was almost tempted, in a fit of momentary despondency, to answer Mr. McAneny's courteous invitation after the laconic style of my witty friend, with the simple statement, that one half of our people are opposed to Civil Service Reform and the other half are not for it. But this would be, I am happy to say on reflection, far from the truth. And yet, though the gains to the cause of Civil Service Reform cannot easily be specified, I feel certain that whatever we may think in times of despondency public opinion in the South is opposed to the Spoils System. Strict party men and party leaders will stoutly deny this, to be sure; but it is nevertheless true and, since political parties are subject to that superior power—the will of the people—the politicians must ultimately yield. We are, however as yet, badly organized; our demands are not clearly stated and we have taken hold of the issue in a way so half-hearted, that the friends of the "spoils System" continue bold—even presumptuous. As was so well said by the lamented George William Curtis, "party machines no more favor Civil Service Reform, than

kings favor the restriction of the royal prerogative." Party leaders with us, therefore, will not admit the growth of the Civil Service Reform sentiment, because they try not to see it. They wish to ignore its growing power, because to admit it is to give it a tremendous sweep; but we shall keep up the fight at every point and make everybody see that ultimate triumph is sure.

### THE OLD SOUTH AND THE MERIT SYSTEM.

In history the South is undeniably committed to the principles of Civil Service Reform. Down to Andrew Jackson's advent to political power her statesmen generally believed not only in its abstract principles, but applied them in fact. As citizens they voted for men of capacity and honesty, and strove and contended for their election. As representatives in Congress, it was their habit to urge the appointment of applicants having the proper qualifications rather than the claims of party fealty. Four of the first six Presidents of the United States were Southern men and they have each left the strongest proof of their attitude on the merit system. They neither appointed men to office as a reward for political partisan services nor removed them because of their political opinions. Nor was nepotism an excuse for bestowing office. On the contrary it was a delicate but strong bar. Even Andrew Jackson was an advocate of the principles of Civil Service Reform until he became President. Then he changed and inaugurated the most unreasonable, unjust and demoralizing political system known to man. Those who respect the past and reverence the memory of Washington, Jefferson, Clay and Calhoun and our ablest statesmen of later days will find, in studying their words and deeds, ample proof to support our contention that the Old South was in favor of the Merit System. The statesmen of the South before the war were our strongest men and no trivial differences with their constituents sufficed to dethrone them. Although known to be opposed to slavery, Henry Clay was never defeated in his own State, in spite of the fact that Kentucky was a slave State. More remarkable even than the continuous public service of Mr. Clay is the fact that the section of the State in which he lived, which is known as the

"Blue Grass Region," has furnished sixteen of Kentucky's thirty-six representatives in the Senate of the United States, notwithstanding the fact that the different sections of the State have always been, and are now, eager to enjoy this distinction. Still, so long as Henry Clay's old home has offered her strongest and best men of demonstrated ability and power, all sectional or local demands have been gracefully waved in her favor. Is not this example worthy of imitation in every department of the public service, and everywhere throughout the land. The strongest and most abundant evidence may be produced to show the attitude of the South before the war on the subject of selecting officers on their merit. We are by tradition, by character, and by the fair and honorable disposition of our people, unmistakably committed to the principles of Civil Service Reform.

#### ATTITUDE OF THE CONFEDERATE CONGRESS ON THE SPOILS SYSTEM.

I have been favored since my arrival in Washington with a paper containing what purports to be the record of a debate in the Confederate Congress on a bill that had been introduced in that body, fixing the tenure of a non-political office at four years. Fixing the tenure, it clearly appears, was never contemplated in the passage of other similar bills, but was an inadvertance. The whole debate is intensely interesting and instructive, but I shall content myself with an extract from the remarks of Mr. Semmes, of Louisiana, and Mr. Wigfall, of Texas:

"Mr. Semmes, of Louisiana, asked if we must continue to adhere to a system which was mainly instrumental in the downfall of the old government. It was this that had more influence than anything else, to bring about the present revolution. Our present constitution does not sufficiently provide against it, and we should here set ourselves against it."

"Mr. Wigfall, of Texas. Rotation in office, based upon the party war-cry, 'To the victors belong the spoils,' was undoubtedly the bane of the government of the United States, and exercised the most demoralizing influence. We should show that it was the intention of the Government to select its officers as individuals select their boot-makers and tailors—not to enquire their politics, or to assume that the office was made for the man; not to confer place and position upon him, because he has one child or forty; but for no other reason than because he is capable, efficient,

and does the work required ; so soon as he fails in this, turn him out, and not otherwise. The demoralization consequent upon the prospect of distribution in certain periods is very great. It leads hosts of persons to forsake their regular employments, and indulge in all kinds of tricks and schemes and combinations to attain their ends. It is an annoyance to every Congressman, and to every official, from the President down. We should endeavor now to decidedly favor the establishment of the precedent, that so long as a man does his duty he should be kept in office."

### WHY THE SOUTH HAS OPPOSED CIVIL SERVICE REFORM IN RECENT YEARS.

Immediately after the War a fairly good reason justified some opposition to the operation of a Civil Service Reform law which seemed devised to keep in office the followers of the party then in control at Washington. But happily that reason no longer exists. Gradually both sides are becoming equal in the possession of minor offices; and, the supremacy of the whites and the undisturbed control of local self government being forever assured, we can and will apply the test of merit in public as we do in private business affairs.

I shall endeavor to state briefly a few of the many difficulties that, in the South, interfere with the more rapid growth of the Merit System which is so just and admirable that it should at once commend itself to public favor. I shall endeavor to give some idea of the manner in which a growing sentiment in favor of that system has manifested itself of late. In the consideration of my subject we must keep in mind several conditions which have been peculiar to the South since the war, namely:

That chaotic state of society which was incident to the Reconstruction period.

The disfranchisement of the negro by devices not strictly legal and his continued presence in the Southern States.

The Solid South and the gradually acquired supremacy of the white race

To bring order out of chaos and to overcome the mistakes and tyranny which were incident to Reconstruction required a period of some fourteen years extending from the close of the civil war. The six years following that period, the first years of local self government since the war, were easily consumed in determining the political status of the negro. In the

two or three years succeeding 1885, the supremacy of the whites was fully and forever established. Then came the South's marvelous industrial development, which is universally conceded and commended. The final accomplishment of these great things has served lately to divert the Southern mind from the old conditions and dead issues, to the consideration of vital issues of the present and future. Members of the party now dominant will henceforth freely differ on great economic issues which greatly overshadow the old issues growing out of the war, and of the so-called race problem. The work of dividing the Solid South has fairly begun by disintegrating the great political party which has long and completely controlled that section. The Solid South is now practically broken, in the sense that Southern men consider themselves free to vote for whom they please, and feel safe now that the old issues are no longer pressing, to vote against their old party, should it promulgate false principles or follow faithless leaders or offer unworthy candidates for office. We have just reached a point where we may expect the two main parties to win alternately. As we have now escaped the tyranny of great majorities—as party leaders can no longer count with certainty on success at the polls—we see the prospects for Civil Service Reform both in Federal, State and municipal affairs, grow brighter. We know the day of complete triumph is close at hand.

#### THE REIGN OF SHAM REFORM.

The first great gain that the Merit System has made in the South is an indirect one and lies in the fact that tens of thousands of voters who, until a comparatively recent date, have firmly adhered to one party, right or wrong, have forever abandoned that practice. This gain, however, has been, in some instances, temporarily offset by the triumph of a dangerous party, conceived in a selfish and unpatriotic spirit, and governed by secret machinations. Mean and self-seeking men, taking advantage of a changing sentiment, have raised an insincere cry of reform and have been supported by many well meaning men who have not at first given due consideration to the principles of the reformers, the character of their leaders, or the merits of their candidates. Recently in

a Southern city the so-called "machine" was beaten by a so-called "Reform party." The candidates on both tickets were about evenly matched, both as to character and intelligence. The so called reformers won in spite of the fact that some of the principles promulgated by them were extremely vicious and unpatriotic and their acknowledged leader was positively known to be corrupt. This was most unfortunate, for the *spirit* of true reform has certainly taken hold of the minds of the people, and every rude shock given to it by pretenders, only serves to prolong our misery under the "Spoils System." We have had so much sham reform, so much parading in the livery of reform, that the very name often condemns a really worthy and meritorious cause. The term is too often synonymous with hypocrisy, and under its banner rascals too frequently march in to power. So often have men that long paraded as great reformers been exposed at last as arrant humbugs, that the bare name of reform provokes suspicion. In a Southern city not long ago, an election for city councilmen was held which resulted in victory for the reformers. These reformers had promised that in filling the offices in their gift they would look solely to the honesty and capacity of the applicants. In due course of time these offices were filled, and on the following day there appeared an article in a highly respectable daily journal which contained this grave charge: "A prominent councilman told the writer a few weeks before the election of city officers that a certain applicant for an important office was in his estimation totally unfit for it—so unfitted that even his candidature was a farce—and yet I observed that this councilman voted for this very candidate on the first ballot. Was it a 'dicker' or a change of heart?" In justice to the public the names should have been given, for, while this was not necessary to satisfy any reasonable mind that it was a "dicker" it would have served a good purpose by making an example there and then of such a rogue. Such affairs are extremely unfortunate at this time but in the end these defeats to party machines—these protests against misgovernment and fraud—will serve as a warning and will prove in the end a decided gain to the cause of good government. Such results tend to breaking up that strict fidelity to party, which in the past has made party leaders so all powerful. A rude shock to politicians now and then makes

them realize that they are on trial, that their tenure is frail, that they may at any time go down in defeat.

#### REVOLT AGAINST BOSSISM IN KENTUCKY.

Recently we have been presented with a splendid illustration of this in Kentucky, where the party leaders expected the people of the State to support a candidate for an honorable and important office, who renounced the party platform. A national issue, the currency, was dragged into a local election. The party in convention adopted a platform of principles that faced one way, and nominated a candidate for Governor who faced in the opposite direction. The result should have been anticipated. Kentuckians would sacrifice much to keep their State in the Democratic line, but not their self-respect. What was the result?

Well, the singular situation of the Democratic party in Kentucky is aptly illustrated by the story of the two Irishmen who occupied berths in a sleeping car on one of our great railway lines. A collision took place in the night and confusion ensued. Both men dressed hastily and when they emerged from behind the curtains Pat, recognizing his friend Mike, said to him "Mike, are you hurted?" "No," said Mike, who in his haste to dress had gotten into his trousers with the hind part before, "I am not hurt, Pat, but I am fatally twisted."

The Democratic party in Kentucky, my own party in my native State, it is almost needless to remark, is like unto Mike, "fatally twisted."

#### TIRED OF EQUIVOCATION.

The people of the South are tired of falsehood, of equivocation, of compromise, and hereafter parties must rely upon sound principles without regard to expediency, and make the issues clear. When we act upon this rule we shall deserve to win. Trimming leads to confusion, and compromises lead generally to defeat. We shall learn in time that truth clearly stated, and correct principles consistently and fearlessly advocated, will receive the approval of the masses of voters. In the South, as in the North, we have too often lost sight of the fact that a corrupt party is just as oppressive and just as dangerous as a wicked and cruel monarch. A monarch may be



dispatched at a blow but it requires years to destroy or even to displace a corrupt political party. Americans are often heard to ridicule people living under a monarchical form of Government for subscribing substantially to the declaration that "the king can do no wrong" and yet when we come to vote we are no better than they, for we in effect declare that "the party can do no wrong." Professing to stand in awe of a danger that is often chimerical, we rush ahead into difficulties by repeatedly voting for men whom we know to be incompetent, and perhaps dishonest.

No one should fancy for a moment that political parties can be dispensed with. Nor is perfection to be expected from parties and party leaders. Parties and party leaders are necessary, and citizens should therefore stand, if possible, with one of the great political parties in all national issues; should enter into party councils and attend party primaries, advocating correct principles and voting only for good men. Pursuing this course, party leaders would soon be selected from the ranks of our strongest, most honest and most capable citizens. Strong, able, honest men will lift up and influence the weak, ignorant and misguided voter, provided the former appear in respectable numbers at the primary or at the polls. Nothing so delights the soul of corrupt politicians as the absence of a strong representation of intellectual men from party councils.

The importance of the primary cannot be overestimated, for it is the mold, so to speak, in which are cast the party principles and party candidates which we will be expected to support. When this is once sufficiently well appreciated we shall cease our present practice of voting for a choice of evils and vote, as we should have the power of doing, for our choice of candidates, among men known to be honest and capable. Under a system of minority representation, a system thoroughly feasible and perfectly just, this right could be insured to every citizen.

Unless we work with the established parties there is little immediate hope for success. Party machinery is necessary, but capable, faithful managers must be placed in charge.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS THAN MERIT TAKE PRECEDENCE.

Our too common failing is, that we sometimes vote and otherwise endorse men for public office knowing them to be

dishonest or incompetent. Honest and capable men are sometimes opposed in State or Municipal elections because they do not hold our peculiar views in politics, though national politics have nothing to do with the case. We even vote against the admirable candidates for the highest or lowest offices because forsooth we do not like their religious opinions. Could anything be more unjust or contemptible? We sometimes even vote against men because they are our competitors in business or because we dislike their manners! We often vote for men because they belong to our club or church, lodge or guild, or because they trade with us, because they are our clients or patients; or because they treat us or bow politely! Worth alone should control, and yet it is lost sight of in the consideration of trifles.

#### SENTIMENTAL CITIZENSHIP.

We of the South were once chided for sending "Confederate Brigadiers" to Congress, but they, as a rule, happened to be our leading and most worthy citizens. Now we are going farther and sometimes vote for a man because he happens to be the son of a "Confederate Brigadier," for the same reason that in the North the people vote for the son of a Federal "Brigadier." The Grand Army of the Republic and other associations of old Northern soldiers being better organized and more powerful than associations of old Southern soldiers at the South, and consequently a greater menace to good government, are too much given to caring for their old comrades at the expense of the nation and to the injury of the public service. He may be thoroughly unfit, still there continues to be something potential in that "Strange spell—a name."

The "Brigadiers" at the South, I regret to say, are now nearly all gone and at present it is often the Colonels and the Majors and the Captains for whom we are asked to vote. Many of them are worthy of our suffrages, and when they are worthy, we ought to give them the advantage of their titles honorably won. But it is too often the case that they are elected on account of a mere sentiment. A mere feeling of gratitude for services rendered as soldiers in the war, or for noble work done as physicians during an epidemic of cholera or yellow fever ought not to cause the election of men to civil

offices for which they are not qualified. Elected alone upon such a plea, blind to their own weakness or folly, or without capacity for executive work, and too stubborn to accept advice, they usually injure their previously well earned reputation, without doing their State or Country the slightest good. Such men are seldom re-elected and their disappointment is so great that it carries them to the grave, cherishing to the last a feeling of resentment against the whole world because they were not estimated at their own valuation. The toast of an old darkey to a retiring Governor of one of our Southern States, who had secured his election on a mere sentiment, was apt and suggestive: "De Gubner: He went inter office wid very little uppersishun, and he come out wid none at all."

#### MERIT NOT TREATED AS THE FIRST REQUISITE.

At the present time, in many of our larger Southern cities, it would be almost impossible to elect—to a seat in Congress—a man who is only distinguished for exalted virtue, strict integrity and a superior order of intelligence. The fact is, few of our best men possessing these qualities would consent to run for office knowing the silly objections too often raised, not only by the "Common herd," as it is called, but by men in the higher walks of life, whose narrow prejudice and selfishness stand in the way of the common good. Questions that do not in the remotest degree enter into the issues of a campaign are forced into it by rogues and bigots, and rogues and bigots usually stand together. In this contention of the individual or of a faction for the success of the hobby advocated by some man or set of men, the main object sought is subordinated or obscured or possibly wholly ignored. In other words, the main issue must yield to the lesser issue, and if this is not done, a compromise or an emasculated policy, or a weak or a bad candidate is the consequence, and this is why men go to Congress or to the Legislature, who are mere time servers and hand shakers, with wavering convictions, mediocre ability, bad habits and sometimes with little claim to honesty.

#### BIGOTS A SERIOUS OBSTACLE TO UNITY.

In some Southern cities the A. P. A. is becoming a serious obstruction to every needed reform. It proscribes

the able man, who chances to be a Catholic, or who is intimate with, or in any way allied to Catholics. They even carry their proscriptive measures to the extent of using their influence against men holding important business connections. They pretend friendliness to a certain class of foreigners of the Protestant faith; but it is a pretense only. The A. P. A. is after the offices, and to secure them it has adopted unwise, un-American and un-Christian methods and measures. It has struck a blow to the very keystone of reform—*Merit*, which in its creed, is not to be considered. The disgrace of disappearance of the A. P. A. party, therefore, which, let us hope will come soon, is necessary before independent voters can unite upon a proper basis. I do not believe that any one seriously anticipates that it will ever become one of the great national parties, but its dupes do hope to be strong enough to make them the balance of power, trusting that they may effect a favorable bargain with one or the other of the great political parties. In this they must fail surely; for neither one of the great political parties can afford to endorse a secret party that seeks to undermine that religious liberty which is guaranteed by the Constitution. No national party could afford to stultify itself by such alliance and to drive from its ranks an element more numerous, more respectable and more powerful than a combination of the A. P. A. and its sympathizers. This craze and all side issues must be speedily brushed away so that the only tests to be applied to a candidate for public office shall be those laid down by Jefferson, namely:

“Is he honest? Is he capable? Is he faithful to the Constitution?” In this way, and only in this way, can we make our government republican and worthy of the high destiny of America. Only in this way can we make our people thoroughly homogeneous, contented and prosperous, enjoying together every blessing of free institutions and imbued with a well founded, generous love of our common country.

#### PROHIBITIONISTS AND POPULISTS NOT HELPFUL

Prohibitionists, too, have been hurtful to reforms in our government. They say that in agreeing to anything less than Prohibition, they will be compromising with wrong, and yet it is clear that much might be gained for the cause of temper-

ance if they would join with those who would be willing to meet them half-way in every reasonable effort to promote their cause. The prohibitionists, however, prefer to sacrifice their whole case and obstruct wise legislation, rather than to accept a little less than they wish. Their cause is, in a large measure, a righteous and wise one, and their motives, we admit, are usually high and noble and they would certainly benefit their party and their country by helping to establish government on a moral, equitable and business-like basis, while slowly erecting bulwarks against the temptations and evils of intemperance.—In like manner the Populists often oppose the most trustworthy and competent men for office, unless he subscribes to their wild and visionary schemes on every subject.

The capacity of great numbers of our voters seems sadly deficient in the power to discriminate between local and national affairs, between the main issues and trifles; and herein we find our problem difficult of solution. The local machine and the national machine are often in the same hands, giving opportunity to party leaders to concentrate national political workers in local elections, and local workers in national elections. Thus the spoilsmen have been enabled to achieve the important victories that might have been prevented by the exercise of a discriminating power upon the part of the intelligent voters.

#### INVOLUNTARY OBSTACLES.

Strange and contradictory as it may seem, religious, benevolent and fraternal associations have often tended to retard the improvement of our Civil Service. On the other hand, educational, professional and business associations have just as often been helpful in advancing it. It is not intended to reflect upon the good and noble work which religious and benevolent and fraternal societies so admirably perform; (and by religious associations I do not mean the churches). Many religious associations have sprung up in latter years not under the church's jurisdiction. But the very spirit that prompts them to generous and helpful action too often makes them, when not restrained by wise deliberation, unconscious or involuntary enemies to the merit system. Bent upon being helpful to the individuals of their order, their zeal makes them blind

to the interests of the State. Having perhaps done their full part in supporting improvident members, or not longer caring to do so, they seem to regard these unfortunate ones as natural heirs to public offices and make them expensive wards of the government.

#### COMMERCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS LOGICAL ALLIES.

On the other hand, Bar Associations, Medical Associations, Bankers' Associations, Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce, School Teachers' Conventions and Alumni Associations, and in fact countless other associations, professional, literary, business and social as well, are bringing together the best minds in all fields of labor with the view of correcting public grievances, in the hope that an exchange of ideas and a free expression of opinion in their meetings may bring out the best thought and the most helpful experience of their members. In these various associations and conventions fair-minded men from all sections of our land and from all parts of the world, of the varying shades of religious and political beliefs, come together with a determination to learn from one another what is most useful and available, and thus they naturally learn and appropriate what is best. They are, in short, the logical allies of good government.

It may be interesting to the League to know that in the "Round Table," a conversation club in Nashville, which meets bi-weekly, Civil Service Reform was the designated subject for discussion at one of its gatherings, and of the fifteen members present fourteen declared themselves straight-out friends of the merit system.

The Old Oak Club, a younger organization of great influence with a larger membership, but devoted to the same objects as the "Round Table," has shown its attitude on the subject by enrolling its entire membership in the "Anti Spoils League." At an Old Oak meeting, a fortnight ago, there were read two most appreciative papers which treated of one of our greatest apostles of the merit system, George William Curtis. I am sure they would have been heard by this organization with pleasure and satisfaction. At the first meeting of the same club to be held in the ensuing New Year "Civil

Service Reform in the United States" is the subject to be discussed.

### IS THE FOREIGNER RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR WOES?

The worker, the trickster, the boss and the foreigner are charged with our political woes. These must bear their share of blame, but how could they continue all the evil practices of which they are accused if our native American population properly discharged their civic duties? The ascendancy of the native American population is overwhelming in the South and we should therefore hear little of the complaint so common elsewhere, of the demoralizing and corrupting influence of the alien. The reverse is true, however, and even in the South many intelligent Americans, joining with a set of blather-skites, declaim with great vehemence against the evil influence of an alien population. It is, therefore, clearly our own fault if corruption in political affairs is practiced, for in the South we are clearly a homogeneous people. The truth about the poor alien is that he generally comes to us, owning little more than the clothes he wears, and that he endures at the beginning of his career in a free country many unexpected hardships and privations. He is to some extent the victim of American politicians. The native American spoilsmen who should know better and who do know better, buy his naturalization papers for him or pay his poll tax and thus make him a qualified voter, or buy him straight out. In other words, shrewd native Americans buy the vote of the needy, ignorant and half-fed alien. They know this to be a violation of law, and they know what the alien does not know, that it is this unlawful practice which is undermining the foundations of our government.

Unless the native American proposes to buy, the alien cannot hope to sell his vote. Here then political corruption would end, if Americans so willed it. The truth is, that, when things don't go right and all of those American spoilsmen and office-seekers who have bought votes, have been doomed to defeat, they naturally feel that they must put the blame somewhere and so they make the poor foreigner their scape-goat. Mr. Bryce and other kindly-disposed critics of American institutions are misled by American friends who try

to account for the weakness of our institutions and for the ill success of our political affairs by putting all the blame of our failings on our immigrants. At the present time the percentage of foreigners in Tennessee, for example, is less than two per cent., and yet no one claims that our public officials are more honest, capable, public-spirited or patriotic than in States where the percentage of foreigners is far greater. In fact, the manner of conducting public offices in the South is less methodical and business-like, and waste or extravagance in the administration of public affairs is greater than in the North, while our taxes are too high, our public buildings and public works, though expensive, are not beautiful, our streets are poor in construction and often filthy; and yet ninety-eight per cent. of our population is native born. We must be fair to the alien, just to ourselves and look elsewhere for the cause of our trouble.

#### THE FEE SYSTEM VERSUS OFFICIAL SALARIES.

In the Southern States the salaries paid to State, County and Municipal officers are unequal and unjust, a fact which is a fruitful cause of trouble. The salaries, for example, of our governors, of our judges, of the mayors of our cities and of the members of the boards of public works are inadequate for well-performed services. The public makes unreasonable demands upon them, to which they are expected to respond because of the meagre salaries. It is not fair to expose them to such strains and temptations. The beggarly salaries we pay and the short terms for which our higher officers are elected deter our ablest and best men from entering politics. Prosperous lawyers earn at the bar two or three times as much as the salaries of judges in our State Courts; why, then, should they enter into public service? On the other hand, there are State, County, Municipal officers whose incomes, under the operation of an abominable fee system, are out of all proportion to the value of their services. De-Tocqueville rightly observed: "The minor offices are well paid; the higher offices ill paid." The large incomes derived from the fees in the minor offices account for the liberal contributions made to the corruption funds which are used in our elections. To preserve these large incomes, a



corrupt lobby is maintained in many of our State legislatures. It has unfortunately occurred that where those richly-paid officers have been appointed by judges, the consideration of the appointment has sometimes been a participation in the perquisites. Frequency of elections, short terms, unequal salaries, and election of judges by the people, have been, are still, and will always be, a curse to us.

#### RECENT REFORM LEGISLATION.

Many of the evils from which we suffer are receiving attention at the hands of a few wise law-makers, and while recent legislative enactments are confined to only a few of the Southern States, and while these enactments may not be sufficiently far reaching, still they are a decided advance in the right direction. They at least encourage us to hope for a wider and more general application of much needed corrective measures. In Kentucky, for example, the new constitution provides (section 96) that all State officers shall be paid by salaries and not otherwise, and that (section 240) no public officer, except the governor, shall receive more than five thousand dollars per annum for his official services. Under an act of the Kentucky legislature for the "Government of cities of the first class," some very common complaints against the police and fire departments of the larger cities are sought to be remedied, as will be seen from the following provisions:

*Section 2893* provides that no officer or member of police force can be removed or discharged or reduced in grade or pay for any political reason. No person can be appointed on account of any political service rendered by him.

*Section 94.*—Excepting the chiefs and persons now employed in said departments, and persons who have been employed during the past five years, every officer or employee shall, before appointment or selection, have the following qualifications:

*First.*—He must read and write correctly and fluently the English language, from dictation, in the presence of examiners appointed by said board.

*Second.*—He must pass a satisfactory examination on the charter and ordinances of the city and such part of the con-

stitution and statutes of the State as relate to the duties of his office.

*Third.*—He must be at least twenty-one years of age and not more than forty-five years of age.

*Fourth.*—He must be of sound health and sufficiently strong to be active and able to discharge easily his duties; and

*Fifth.*—He must be a resident and voter in the city.

*Section 99.*—No officer or policeman or member of the Fire Department shall be called on for any contribution or assessment by any official superior or political organization or committee. No officer or member of said Police or Fire Department shall be allowed to solicit any contributions or funds or to sell any tickets or procure money by any devices from the public. Any persons violating the provisions of this section shall be fined in a sum not exceeding one hundred dollars or imprisoned for a period not exceeding two months, or both so fined or imprisoned.

#### COLLEGIATE INFLUENCE.

We shall now begin to feel the great advantage resulting from the work that has been done in the last ten years by our colleges and universities for reforms in our government. The course in political education is now an essential part of the curriculum of every college. Every year hundreds of young men go forth from these institutions of learning, imbued with correct ideas of government and animated by an honorable ambition to be useful citizens. It is they who will be stanch allies of the advocates of good government and who will certainly help to make a successful fight in favor of the merit system. Professor Thornton of the University of Virginia in speaking of the college-graduate's position in life, wisely and truthfully observed that "in politics, at the bar, in the medical profession, in business, he stands for cleanness and honesty and is the hated foe of the bribing lobbyist, the unjust judge, the quack and the cheat."

The influence of this class of men is now clearly seen in many localities, and each year their number and power increase. The sense of civic duty, as well as the necessity for exercising it, will be stimulated by their contact with the masses, and their increasing familiarity with the principles of

government and with the elements of administrative machinery will not only enable them to exercise their rights as citizens but to impart their knowledge and their spirit of patriotism to others. We need an army of just such men who are to be the leaders and the teachers of the people. Strong, able, honest men, who are willing to come out of their shells and mingle with their fellow citizens, rubbing up against them, and showing that none are too good for practical politics in its best sense, pointing out to the people both their rights and their obligations. The people always want to learn, but they won't learn unless met in a straight-forward, manly way,—not as unfeeling creatures devoid of self-respect, honesty and intelligence.

#### BENEFITS TO SOUTHERN MEN UNDER CIVIL SERVICE REFORM.

The impression widely prevalent in the South that Civil Service Reform is designed to favor the highly educated and the wealthy is erroneous. It is also not true that under its operation the South fares unequally with other sections. Through the operation of the reform law, employment in the Civil Service was thrown open to the people of the South for the first time since the breaking out of the War of the Rebellion. Poor men and men of limited education but ambitions and resolved to learn, have risen to distinction in our Civil Service. It is well known that during Mr Harrison's administration Commissioner Roosevelt made it a special object to encourage young Southerners to go into the examinations and to see that, when appointments were made, the full quota of each Southern State was allowed. It ceased to be a novelty for Southern Congressmen to meet young constituents on the streets of Washington and to learn that they were there under a Republican administration. Nothing of this sort had been known for a generation. Thirteen Southern States, including Maryland and Kentucky, are, under the operation of the Reform law, entitled to thirty per cent. of the positions in the classified Civil Service. Of the eleven Civil Service Commissioners appointed up to Jan. 1st, 1895, four were Southern men, viz.: William L. Trenholm and Hugh S. Thompson of South Carolina, George D. Johnson of Louisiana and John R. Procter of Kentucky. What more had we a right to ask?

What fairer treatment could we expect? It should also be borne in mind that an appointment now in the civil service means an opportunity for an official career. This is impossible under the spoils system. As a plain business proposition, for government is only another name for business, what could be better for both the citizen and office holder?

The Southern press is fast falling into line and it is now definitely known that at least twenty-five daily papers, over one hundred weekly papers, and eight monthly publications are known to be entirely friendly to the merit system and are championing its cause with zeal and intelligence. In fact few Southern newspapers now openly and enthusiastically support the "Spoils System," a sure indication of the tendency of public opinion on that subject. The advocates of the merit system, steadily increasing in numbers, are each year becoming more active and aggressive and ultimately must hold the balance of power in determining the fate of candidates and of parties.

As a Southern man, both by the accident of birth and as the result of my deliberate choice, proud of the past of my section and confident of its future glory, with that of the Nation, I declare it to be my honest conviction that the Southern people are tired of the iniquities of a vicious public policy which has always been condemned by her wisest statesmen, who have ever taught that the greed of the spoilsman, and the corruption of elections are the greatest dangers threatening the perpetuity of our government. Their words of warning were once heeded; these words are now again being driven home with telling force to the Southern heart and mind, and he who seeks shall find unmistakable evidences of an awakening patriotism, of a higher sense of public duty and of a healthier political life and spirit abroad in the land.

# The Reign and Overthrow of an Officeholding Oligarchy.

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BY CHARLES J. BONAPARTE.

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The Pendleton bill was reported to the Senate on December 12th, 1881, just fourteen years ago. In the debate which followed, Senator Brown of Georgia expressed grave apprehensions regarding the effects of its enactment on our free institutions. His words were:

"I say it is not compatible with our very form of government. It is one step in the direction of the establishment of an aristocracy in this country, the establishment of another privileged class. \* \* \* It builds up a powerful class supported out of the Treasury of the United States, out of the taxes of the people, and places in their hands the power, if they choose to exercise it—and there is a great deal of human nature in man, so that they probably would exercise it—the power to do much to control the future rulers and destinies of this government.

I am not very fresh from my reading of Roman History; but as I recollect it there was a period in the history of that government when it became necessary to establish the praetorian guard to protect the ruler against the populace.

It would naturally enough have been claimed that that guard would take no part in the politics of Rome, and yet in the workings of time that praetorian guard became the master of Rome, and assumed control of the government. As they protected the sovereign, they dictated who should be the sovereign, and for a large enough amount of money they would displace one sovereign to make room for another. How do we know that we may not build up a similar class here, when we build up a lifetime aristocracy in office, or when we establish a lifetime tenure of office? It is contrary to the very genius and spirit of our government."

The fears thus expressed by this eminent statesman had haunted many others of our public men from the time when legislation looking towards Civil Service Reform was first suggested by Mr. Jenckes. the "old war horses" and "old wheel-horses" who flourished in his day snorted suspicious defiance

at a measure destined, in the language of one of the best known, at that time, of their number "to create a pampered aristocracy." It is not my purpose to discuss how far these patriotic forebodings have been justified by the event; the dangers to our liberty lurking in the insidious proposals of Jenckes and Pendleton have had every opportunity to become visible since the Senator from Georgia depicted them in prophecy. In one of the Ingoldsby legends, the hero remarks:

"I did not see my little friend, because he was not there." Such blindness as we may exhibit to these perils admits, perhaps, of the same explanation.

I have lived, however, for some twenty or twenty-five years under a government marked by not a few of the characteristics which these sages saw in vision defacing that of our nation. In Baltimore we have had a powerful class supported out of the taxes of the people holding "in their hands the power, if they choose to exercise it" (and they most undeniably did choose) "to do much to control the future rulers and destinies" of the City and State. We have had an organization by no means unlike a "praetorian guard" which "protected the sovereign," at least the sovereign *de facto*, "from the populace" when this "populace" endangered his safety or continued rule at the polls, and it "protected" him, on the whole, very effectually. Moreover, this "guard," had occasion offered, would have readily "dictated who should be the sovereign" and, "for a large enough sum of money, displaced one sovereign for another;" indeed, it actually did these things whenever and in so far as it had the opportunity.

In Baltimore that "first step towards the establishment of a privileged class," which Senator Brown saw in the Pendleton bill, and a good many succeeding steps as well, had been taken a number of years before the bill was heard of, or its author heard of as a Civil Service Reformer; it is, perhaps, doubtful whether the late rulers of my native city could appropriately be called "pampered," for the adjective at least suggests indolence, and to charge them with this fault would be certainly unjust; nevertheless, they no less certainly constituted a "privileged class" in every sense of the term; a class of men in many respects *legibus soluti*, privileged to do wrong (or what would be wrong for others) with impunity and even with profit; superior themselves to the laws as well as

able to make the laws for those of inferior station ; in my trespass on your attention this afternoon I shall depict a few features of their rule, and describe briefly some of the causes and incidents of their downfall.

It will be noted that I have not called them "an aristocracy." Mr. Freeman observes in his *Comparative Politics*:

" I need hardly say that the vulgar use of the word 'aristocracy,' to mean, not a form of government but a class of society, has no countenance from Aristotle or from any other writer who attends to the meaning of the words which he uses."

And in another passage :

" Aristocracy, I need hardly say, in its strict sense, is the rule of the best : indeed aristocracy would be the rule of the ideally best, those who are really wisest, bravest and most upright. Any other standard, be it that of age, of birth, or of wealth, is simply a substitute which is accepted because, in an imperfect world, the rule of the ideally best is something which may be talked about, but which will never be found in actual being."

In accordance with his views, I might describe our recent government as an aristocracy wherein the imperfection of the world was recognized by accepting, as the standard substituted for ideal wisdom, courage and uprightness, exceptional skill in ballot stuffing and kindred crimes and marked ability in the advantageous sale of legislation and various other forms of bribery. But, as Mr. Freeman is himself obliged to admit, in common parlance "aristocracy" is used in the sense whereof he and Aristotle disapprove ; and I fear lest its employment in this paper might lead the unthinking and ill-informed to suppose that our late rulers constituted a hereditary caste, looking down, regardless of individual merit, upon all born without its pale : a reproach to which they are not fairly open.

I had, however, another, perhaps a better reason for avoiding the term. The same author from whom I have just quoted tells us further :

" I should rather say that it is only in a republic that a real aristocracy can exist. Corinth and Rome, Venice and Genoa, Bern and Nürnberg, bear out what I am saying. The nobles who cringed at the court of the Great King of Paris, or at the lesser courts of his imitators

in the petty despotisms of Germany and Italy, had no right to the name of an aristocracy. Aristocracy is the rule of the best ; they were not the best, and they did not rule."

And again :

" I maintain then that aristocracy, in its true sense, is something essentially republican, something to which a monarchic state can present only a faint approach."

Now the government which has lately fallen in Baltimore was distinctly monarchical, at least, in its tendencies. Under it, power was not always, indeed it was never, quite concentrated in the hands of one man, but our rulers were never truly equal, *inter sese* ; their mutual relations rather resembled those of the several Augusti and Cæsars of the later Roman empire : these always tended towards, and within the past eight years had well nigh definitively settled into the dominion of a single ruler surrounded by a group of more or less powerful, sometimes more or less mutinous, but always distinctly subordinate, lieutenants.

There were, however, already indications that in this case, as in those of all other privileged classes known to history, there would have been in time developed a theory of hereditary right to public office, as the nobility of the Roman Republic was gradually formed of descendants of office holders, claiming by custom a monopoly of all posts of trust and honor. Thus in the Seventeenth Ward of the City, there bore sway a magnate whose merits as a "praetorian" had been proven by an almost incredible number of assaults, arrests and indictments for crimes of violence, whilst his influence was no less clearly illustrated by his prompt acquittals and the steadiness with which, throughout his eventful career, he retained the apparently modest, but really important position, of Superintendent of Street Cleaning for his District. However useful as a drill master for recruits, advancing years and frequent wounds had, in a measure, impaired his personal prowess, but during the past year public attention has been called to three worthy sons, displaying at once their father's decided inclination towards public employment, and his characteristic methods of deserving this. They "did good work" at the last election ; unfortunately their services can



hardly receive the recognition they expected, although it is not impossible that another may await them.

A slight symptom of that spirit of social exclusiveness which will be certainly shown in time by any ruling class, although it is but just to say that the oligarchy of Baltimore, so far, at least, as my personal observation can be trusted, was, as yet, but little affected by it, may, perhaps be found in the title chosen for a little book to which I would direct your attention. I believe that the names and residences of the local "Four Hundreds" in our several cities are usually to be found in compilations entitled "Blue Books"; this reason may have caused "Colonel" Edward O'Mahony to choose the same title for a work headed by the suggestive query: "Do you Want an Office?" and said on the cover to contain: "An Accurate List of Every Position in the State and City with their Duties and Salaries." The author is widely known in Baltimore, and has held, according to general and uncontradicted report, the responsible position of "Wiskinkie." I do not vouch for my orthography in this instance, and confess ignorance as to the origin or meaning of the name, but the duties of the office are well understood; its incumbent collects, or collected, the assessment levied on the salaries of all office holders under the state and municipal governments, which defrayed the expenses of keeping at each successive election the sovereign in power, and, it has been sometimes whispered, if not all needed for this purpose, afforded occasionally a partial compensation for the cares of State to those burdened with them. The peculiar experience of its author may, perhaps, explain an apparent (but only apparent) misstatement in what he says of his work; it contains not one word as to the "duties" of the several positions enumerated, except so far as these are intimated in their respective names. This, however, is but seemingly inconsistent with the promise of the cover; the only *official* duty of any real consequence connected with a public position in Baltimore under the late *régime* was that the holder should regularly draw his salary so as to promptly pay the assessments on this: if he did so much, whatever more he did for the State or City was, in great measure, a work of supererogation, which would scarcely, if at all, affect his retention in office, and his duties to the Boss the "Blue Book" does not profess to describe. I will parti-

ally repair this omission, but must first say a word as to the number and compensation of the officials mentioned.

To understand the system of government which has existed for nearly a generation in Baltimore, we may glance at three departments only of the City's public service, those headed in the book respectively: "City Commissioner's Office," "General Superintendent of Lamps" and "Superintendent of Streets and District Superintendents." These were composed as follows:

#### CITY COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE.

One City Commissioner.....	\$4,000
Three Assistant City Commissioners.....	2,000
One Bridge Engineer.....	2,400
One Chief Clerk.....	1,500
One Assistant Clerk.....	1,200
Five Engineers, each .....	1,500
One Clerk.....	1,200
Eighteen Foremen of Gangs.....	1,200
Five Engineers.....	1,200
One Sand Inspector.....	1,080
Six Draughtsmen, each.....	900
One Clerk.....	1,100
Eight Rodmen, each.....	900
Three Rodmen, each.....	700
One Keeper, Belair Lot.....	800
Twelve Watchmen, each.....	720
Two Superintendents of Annex, each.....	1,000
One Superintendent of Light Street Bridge.....	1,200
Six Assistants at Light Street Bridge, each.....	600
Fourteen Superintendents of Cobble Stone Gangs .....	600
One Paymaster.....	1,400
One Assistant Paymaster.....	900
Fifteen Tally Clerks, each.....	750
Twelve Carpenters, each.....	900
Eighteen Assistant Foremen of Gangs, each.....	600
Two thousand Laborers and other minor positions when working full force, <i>per</i> week.....	10

#### GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT OF LAMPS.

One General Superintendent.....	\$2,000
One Clerk.....	1,000
Two Inspectors of Electric Lights, each.....	900
Two Inspectors of Repairs, each.....	900
Five General Utility Men, each.....	520
Five District Superintendents for City, each.....	600
Two District Superintendents for Annex, each.....	936

Twenty-one Lamplighters, Western District, each...	416
Twenty-two Lamplighters, Northwestern District, each.....	416
Twenty-two Lamplighters, Southern District, each.....	416
Twenty-two Lamplighters, Northeastern District, each.....	416
Twenty-four Lamplighters, Eastern District, each.....	416
Thirty-four Lamplighters, Annex, each.....	416

#### SUPERINTENDENTS OF STREETS AND DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS.

One General Superintendent.....	\$2,000
One Clerk.....	1,000
Seven District Superintendents, each.....	1,000
Four Tally Clerks at Dumps, each.....	600
One Foreman of Street Cleaning Wagons.....	700
Five Drivers of Street Cleaning Wagons, each.....	550
Twenty-seven Drivers of Street and Garbage Carts, First District, each.....	935
Thirty-seven Drivers of Street and Garbage Carts, Second Dis- trict, each.....	935
Twenty-seven Drivers of Street and Garbage Carts, Third Dis- trict, each.....	935
Thirty-seven Drivers of Street and Garbage Carts, Fourth Dis- trict, each.....	935
Thirty-six Drivers of Street and Garbage Carts, Fifth District, each.....	935
Thirty-eight Drivers of Street and Garbage Carts, Sixth District, each.....	935
Nineteen Drivers of Street and Garbage Carts, Seventh District, each.....	935

In these three departments alone there were employed, when that of the City Commissioner was "working full force," and, it is needless to say, that such was always the case when elections were held and might be, if needful, at the time of primaries, 2,540 men; 95 per cent. of these discharged functions for which any ordinary laborer was qualified; all, except perhaps a dozen of those highest in rank, received a compensation greatly in excess of that paid for similar services by private employers; and all of them, without exception, were selected for reasons of political expediency or personal favoritism.

The last remark, although strictly accurate, may be somewhat misleading; I do not mean that in these departments or any others, the subordinate employees of the city, or that those of the State, were chosen capriciously or without refer-

ence to their capacity to discharge the *real*, as distinguished from the merely *nominal*, duties which they had to perform. On the contrary, every man of them, with exceptions altogether insignificant in number, was selected because he had shown, or was expected to show, marked fitness for service in the "praetorian guard," to which I have alluded, and, if he fulfilled these expectations during a period of probation of reasonable length, he was assured of a fixity of official tenure far greater than any contemplated by the Pendleton bill or any similar measure, since it was, under ordinary conditions, unaffected by the merits of his official conduct. As an illustration the Seventeenth Ward chieftain to whom I have alluded, was first called to my attention as an office holder (he was already well-known in other capacities) in 1883, when he was desperately wounded in a shooting affray at the very door of the City Hall, his assailant being afterwards acquitted on the ground of self defence. He had then held his present position for some time, and, unless my memory be at fault, he has retained it uninterruptedly during the twelve years which have since elapsed. Nor is his case in any wise exceptional; such services as his,—I mean, of course, as a praetorian, not as a District Superintendent of Streets,—were too valuable to be lightly lost.

If the character of these services be asked, I can best answer by giving the dry facts of an event which deserves a more worthy and perhaps a more sympathetic historian. To return to Mr. Freeman, every reader of his Norman Conquest must share his regret that the legend of the battle of Stamford bridge is proven baseless and its history is lost; that it is only in imagination :

"We may see the golden Dragon, the ensign of Cuthred and Aelfred, glitter on high over this its latest field of triumph. . . . We may call up before our eyes the final moment of triumph, when for the last time Englishmen on their own soil had possession of the place of slaughter."

There is even greater reason to deplore the probable loss to the world of any adequate narrative of the Special Election held in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Wards of Baltimore on March 26th last, when, probably for the last time, our veteran praetorians returned with sundown victors to their camp, a

loss almost certainly irreparable, for the relations of our late rulers towards that class of the community known to them as "damn literary fellers" were so far from cordial that it is eminently unlikely any Freeman will be hereafter found to lovingly chronicle the deeds of might which preceded their downfall.

It may be well to explain that one member of the Second Branch of our City Council is chosen every second year for each two Wards of the City; this election was held in the present year and, therefore, next previously in 1893. Towards the end of last winter the gentleman representing the fifteenth and sixteenth Wards died. The circumstances under which his successor was chosen are thus set forth in a report of the Standing Committee on Elections of the Baltimore Reform League, presented, after a very careful investigation, to the Executive Committee on July 11th last:

"It will be remembered that at the election of the first Branch of the City Council in November, 1894, the combined Republican vote in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Wards was 2851 and the combined Democratic vote was 2,338, a Republican majority in the two Wards of 513. It is a fact of public notoriety that a victory for the Democratic management at the Special Election in March following was regarded by Democratic politicians as a supreme necessity to arrest the party demoralization which followed upon the November election. It is accordingly significant that we find that at the Special Election in the following March, about five months after the Democratic defeat of 1894, and without any apparant change or occasion for change in popular political sentiment, the combined Republican vote in the two wards was declared to have fallen to 2444 and the combined Democratic vote was declared to have increased to 2471—a declared Democratic majority of 27."

The result thus attained is the more worthy of note because at the election held last month, the Republican candidate for the same office received in the two Wards 3812 votes, a gain of 961 over that cast in 1894 and of 1368 over that cast (or at least returned) in the previous spring, whilst the Democratic vote was 2447, only 109 more than in 1894, and actually 24 less than at the Special Election. No one will seek to detract from the hard-earned glory of our prætorians by pretending that any real change in public sentiment could have converted, or even aided materially to convert, into a minority of 27 a majority of 513, which at the next succeeding election became one of 1365. Nor, it is but just to say, has any one

attempted seriously to dispute their claim to full credit for the achievement. It is true that, in the language of the report from which I have just quoted :

" The Democratic candidate was seated by the Democratic majority in the Second Branch in the City Council, notwithstanding the protest of his Republican competitor, which was tabled without discussion, and without pretence of investigation of the truth of its allegations."

But the report goes on to say :

" The evidence before your Committee, however, shows that the declared Democratic majority of 27 was wholly fraudulent, and that the Democratic candidate probably received the benefit of 188 fraudulent votes, and perhaps of 259 such votes, thus converting the declared majority of 27 into a minority of probably 232 votes, and certainly of 161."

Of the correctness of the conclusion thus expressed, except in so far as it is a great and evident understatement, no one who has examined this report and its appended exhibits can entertain any doubt. A few extracts from the report of the League's counsel, constituting one of these exhibits, may illustrate the efficient causes of the result. He says :

" The result of this investigation is to make certain that at least 188 names voted on were voted on by persons to whom they did not belong. There are 71 other votes, each of which it is practically certain was cast by repeaters, although it would not be possible to prove to absolute demonstration that they were. These votes were cast on the names of persons about whom nothing can be learned at their registered address, and whose names were either originally placed upon the registration list for fraudulent purposes, or of persons who since their registration have removed entirely from the City, leaving no trace of their present whereabouts. . . .

" Both colored and white repeaters were engaged in the perpetration of these frauds. Of the votes, each of which was without the possibility of a doubt cast by a repeater, 105 were cast upon the names of colored men and 83 upon the names of white men. Of the 71 votes which to a moral, though not a legal certainty, were cast by repeaters, 52 were cast upon the names of white persons, and 19 upon those of colored persons. . . .

" The gangs or companies of repeaters were relatively large at the openings of the polls in the morning, but later in the day they seem more frequently to have consisted of 2 to 5 persons, though, of course, occasionally a repeater came to the polls alone. . . .

" In addition to the fraudulent votes actually polled, there were a great many attempts to vote fraudulently. These attempts failed because the

challengers representing the candidate, who, on the face of the returns, was defeated, were able to show that the person offering the vote could not possibly be the person registered. . . .

"The efforts made to prevent the fraudulent reception of voters not infrequently attended with serious risks to the persons making them. Thus, in the Ninth Precinct of the Fifteenth Ward a colored man, who had lived in the precinct practically all his life, and he is now a man of 44 years of age, noticed in line before the polls opened a number of colored men whom he knew not to be residents of the precinct. He himself was at the head of the line, and, having voted, he stepped out of the polling-room and warned Mr. Robert E. Fisher, a resident of the Ward and an officer of the First Branch of the City Council, that there were a number of colored repeaters in line. While talking to Mr. Fisher on the subject, a white man, whose identity I have been unable to discover, struck him with such force as to knock him down and break his right lower jaw in two places. . . .

"In the Third Precinct of the Fifth Ward the Republican challenger states that, while insisting upon the arrest of a man of 30 years of age, who had offered to vote on the name of a man of 54 years of age, he was knocked down by persons in the room, and, when he got up, was again struck, the repeater making his escape during the scuffle. . . .

"At the late election in three of the Precincts persons, while engaged in peaceful attempts to prevent election frauds, were assaulted, and more or less seriously beaten. In no one of these cases was the perpetrator of the assault arrested, and in the only case in which an arrest was made in connection with these assaults, the persons arrested were the victims of the attack and not the persons making it. . . .

"Of all the persons voting illegally and attempting to vote illegally—the aggregate number of both classes of which must have certainly exceeded 300 in the Wards—only seven were arrested. . . .

"The result has been that out of the, as before mentioned, 300 attempts, successful and unsuccessful, to vote illegally, only two men were indicted upon charges laid on election day, or by any officers of the law."

I have said thus much of the special election of last March because, although otherwise of comparatively little importance, it serves to illustrate with special clearness one of the principal causes of the Ring's long lease of power in Maryland; this is simply that, through its absolute control of the State and Municipal patronage, it was able to maintain in Baltimore, at the people's cost, a small standing army of experts in election frauds and professional ruffians, unreservedly subject to its order and prepared to furnish any reasonable majority which could be required for its safety under normal conditions; whilst it could likewise assure them almost certain immunity from punishment for their crimes committed in its in-

terest. But this alone would not have availed it much : even if we suppose the number of fraudulent votes cast at the special election to have been (as it very possibly may have been) twice as great as the Reform League's Committee reported, still at least four-fifths of those received by the Ring's candidate must have been legal votes, and, with all its facilities for successful fraud, its reign would have been short-lived but for its unqualified and, of late years, undisputed dominion within the Democratic party. Indeed, it fell at last, not because it either couldn't or wouldn't cheat, but because, although it would, it couldn't cheat enough to overcome the widespread revolt within that party against its domination. A few words then as to the instrumentalities which rendered that nomination permanent and irresistible.

The Venetian oligarchy maintained its rule through a Council of Ten, that of Baltimore may have been said to reign through one of Nine, bearing the modest and outwardly innocent title of City Members of the Democratic State Central Committee. There was one marked difference, however, between the two bodies : in Venice the Doge was a figurehead and not a member of the Council, in Baltimore his analogue, the reigning Boss, was a Member of the Council and very decidedly not a figurehead. Moreover, the Council itself was differently organized : our rulers may not be, I think, the probabilities are very strong that they are not, familiar with the writings of the late John Stuart Mill, but they have practically endorsed his recommendation of the organization given by the East India Company to its Councils. Of these bodies Mr. Mill says :

- “ These Councils are composed of persons who have professional knowledge of Indian affairs. . . . As a rule, every member of Council is expected to give an opinion, which is, of course, very often a simple acquiescence. . . . In ordinary cases the decision is according to the sense of majority ; . . . but if the Governor-General or Governor thinks fit, he may set aside even their unanimous opinion. . . . The result is that the chief is, individually and effectively, responsible for every act of the government. The Members of Council have only the responsibility of advisers.”

In like manner in all the various deliberative bodies, and there were several which, with more or less formality of procedure, were permitted to share in the government of our oli-



garchy, whilst the Sub-Bosses had the right to speak and even to swear, freely, the last word, the effective decision, lay always with the Supreme Boss.

The authority of the body to which I have referred as of decisive weight in the party organization, seems at first sight simple and harmless, being limited substantially to selecting the times, places and officers of the Democratic primaries; but this had come to include the determination in advance of their results upon the principle stated succinctly by one of the witnesses in Commissioner Roosevelt's investigation of the Baltimore Post Office, that, in primaries in that City, "whoever gets two judges" (out of three) "wins." In fact, so fully was this recognized, at least as to Democratic primaries, that for the past eight years both these and the subsequent conventions have been pure forms; invariably the fate of all candidacies has been determined by one man, or, at most, by two or three men, before a vote was cast on them, and the idea of running an opposition ticket has not even occurred to any one. I might give my illustrations of this singular situation, but one of the most recent and most striking will suffice.

For the Democratic nomination as Governor there were several candidates, and had been in some of the counties of the State an animated contest: the subject attracted universal attention and aroused no little feeling. Yet at the city primaries and at the subsequent District Conventions which chose delegates to the State Convention there was not even a ripple of excitement. At the former every body voted, that is to say, every body who voted at all, for the prescribed candidates whose names were first known when seen on the tickets; the latter remained in session but the few minutes needed to organize and unanimously elect the appointed delegates regarding whom there had been as little antecedent publicity. And when the Convention was held, a gentleman received the nomination, who had not been thought of, or, at all events, mentioned as a possible candidate until every primary of the State had been held. The history of his choice was thus given in the *Baltimore Sun* of the day following:

"Here is the way the nomination for Governor came about: Senator Gorman had said in effect to Mr. Rasin, 'I will not accept as a candidate Governor Brown, Judge Robinson or Judge Fisher.'

"Mr. Rasin had said in effect to Senator Gorman: 'I will not ac-

cept as a candidate Thomas G. Hayes, Spencer C. Jones or John Walter Smith.'

"Then came the question: 'On whom can we unite?'

"Several gentlemen were considered, and finally Mr. Hurst was decided upon. Friends of Mr. Rasin and friends of Senator Gorman were sent to Mr. Hurst separately, so as to make the offer of the Governorship look like a spontaneous movement. Mr. Hurst consented; Gorman and Rasin did the rest."

The last few words are slightly misleading; when the two potentates had agreed upon a man for the place, and he had agreed to take it at their hands, "the rest" was done already.

We may glance for a moment at the composition of the body which could and, indeed, can still, control, without the possibility of effectual resistance, the action of the party organization. Of course, this has varied from time to time, but there is nothing abnormal in its present *personnel*. This included, when it was chosen, a Police Justice, the Clerk of the Superior Court, a Court Bailiff, the Insurance Commissioner of the State, a Member of the City Council, the City Examiner of Titles, the Warden of the Penitentiary, the Superintendent of Streets, and the Clerk of the Criminal Court. Every one of these and, with a single exception, every one is still a public officer, although several more will probably lose their places as the result of the late election; moreover, all but possibly one or two have been continuously or nearly so in public employ, "supported out of the taxes of the people," to use Senator Brown's words, for from ten to thirty years. For the most of them rotation in office has meant emphatically "rotating out of one office," city, state or federal, "into another," and the same is no less true of the great bulk of those who hold and have recently held the offices catalogued by Mr. O'Mahony. It is not surprising that Mr. Roosevelt should have found reason to say in his report of the investigation to which I have alluded:

"All of the office-seeking or office-holding ward-workers who came before me, evidently believed that the business of managing primaries, and in fact the business of conducting politics generally belonged of right to the office-holding caste. They were as thorough believers in a system of oligarchical government as if they had lived in Venice or in Sparta, only the names enrolled in their 'Golden Book' were those of the men who through political influence had been fortunate enough to get government place or who hoped to get it."

That these men should think this is the more natural because, as I have already said, they not only enjoyed a monopoly of political power, but were granted a practical license to violate the law. I spoke of this feature of our polity at the first Conference for Good City Government, held in Philadelphia nearly two years ago, and as I may safely presume that those among my present hearers who either heard or read what I then said, have wisely forgotten this, I may be pardoned the vanity of quoting my own words:

“ Article 9 of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of Maryland declares:—

“ ‘ That no Power of suspending laws or the execution of laws, unless by, or derived from, the Legislature, ought to be exercised or allowed.’

“ ‘ *Nous avons changé tout cela,*’ and a power of suspending laws or their execution exists in Baltimore, which is in no wise ‘ derived from the Legislature,’ although the political existence of members of the Legislature is often ‘ derived’ from those who exercise this power. On our statute book are laws which seem to describe penalties for election frauds, for various forms of gambling and of swindling disguised as gambling, for illicit liquor selling and for maintaining or advertising resorts for immorality, but practically all these pretended crimes are licensed, except the one first named, and that is rewarded. In an address which I delivered some years since at one of the annual meetings of our local Society for the Suppression of Vice, I said, and I now and here repeat: It is no exaggeration of language to say that saloons and gambling houses and brothels are here nurseries for statesmen, that the active hostilities of their keepers is, if not fatal, at least a grave impediment to success in public life; and that men and women who gain their living by habitually breaking laws have a potent voice in selecting the public servants who make, interpret, and execute those laws.”

It must be further remembered that I could then also say truly:

“ A very important condition of municipal government in Baltimore is the ‘Grandmother’s Fund.’ As I am away from home, it may be well to explain that this is not a particular sum of money committed to a designated custodian, but represents the aggregate proceeds of various kinds of tribute levied upon the community by its real, as contradistinguished from its nominal rulers. This tribute includes assessments on office-holders and candidates for office, ‘benevolences’ from contractors doing work or furnishing supplies of any kind to the City or State or institutions under public control, the price of franchises and privileges and special legislation of every kind, whether from the City Council or the General Assembly, the amounts contributed by corporations when sub-

jected to a process known technically as 'plugging,' and the ransom paid by criminals of all sorts, and especially, as I have endeavored to explain by policy players, brothel-keepers and offenders against the liquor laws, for impunity."

The oligarchy of Baltimore is a thing of the past. When I commenced this paper, I expected to tell, at least briefly, the tale of its downfall, but when I had written what I have now read, I realized that ere this my time and your patience would be alike exhausted. It has fallen, I hope and believe, never to rise, at least in its old-time shape or strength. As to the causes of its fall, I would say but one word. The underlying theory of its system cannot be better expressed than it has been by Mr. Roosevelt in the same report, when he says:

"Resolved into its ultimate elements, the view of the spoils politician is that politics is a dirty game, which ought to be played solely by those who desire, by hook or by crook, by fair play or by foul play, to win pecuniary reward, and who are quite indifferent as to whether this pecuniary reward takes the form of money or of office. . . . At present the ordinary office-seeking ward-workers, and a very large percentage of office-holders have grown to believe that it is a part of the natural order of things that those who hold or seek to hold the offices should exercise the controlling influence in political contests."

After all, in a free country, a system of government founded upon such a theory was doomed to die. Accidental or personal causes might hasten, as they might retard, its fate, but nothing could have finally averted this. Such a political structure was indeed "contrary to the very genius and spirit of our government."

# Civil Service Reform in Its Bearings Upon the Interests of Workingmen.

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BY HERBERT WELSH.

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When Mazzini, the great Italian patriot, addressed the workingmen of his country in 1844, he chose as the title of his essay "The Duties of Man," in sharp antithesis to the great cry which heralded the French revolution—"The Rights of Man." No reformer certainly was more sensitive to the rights of man, in the recognition of which liberty was cradled, but with true religious intuition he perceived that rights were an empty possession, even to the freest of us, unless the heart that rejoiced in them were alive to the obligations they conferred, unless the mind which discerned and demanded them humbly recognized them as the mother of duties. Mazzini pointed out to his fellow countrymen how barren to the world had been the possession of rights gained by the revolution, where the advance was followed by no recognition of duties to one's self and one's fellows. He claimed that the recognition of individual rights must be followed by a sense of universal obligation. He appealed to his hearers with a breadth and simplicity of spirit which must have at once erased the line which separates the workingman from man, and have reached directly his hearers, for the heart leaps artificial boundaries. "I intend to speak to you according to the dictates of my heart," he said; "of the holiest things we know; of God, of humanity, of the Fatherland and the family." And so, in speaking to-day, out through this audience, to those workingmen whom I may be able to reach, of the appeal which Civil Service Reform should make to them, I do it with these four great human relationships which Mazzini enumerates firm in my mind—God, humanity, the Fatherland and family, and not so much to workingmen as men of a

separate and distinct class do I speak as to them as members of the great human family. But this nobler point of view will not exclude the consideration of those especial points in which Civil Service Reform is of peculiar benefit to those whom we call wage-earners.

The true American workingman, and the true American of whatever trade or work in life he be, are one in this: That both desire the full benefits of American institutions; both desire to see the Government of these United States stand for liberty, for equal laws, under which men may not be tempted to change their conceptions of God as a just and loving Father, of humanity as the great family of mankind, throughout whose extent some day may be realized the idea of universal brotherhood, and under which the family may be made a holy and true relationship, the fountain of domestic virtue, the support of the State, which I, for one, believe that it was ordained to be. We are one, workingman and other man, in desiring that America shall be a nation in which these ideas, which appeal to all hearts, shall be nurtured and have sway. I take it that the true American workingman will be quite content if the Government under which we live be honest and true, if it will truly seek those great principles of liberty and justice to rich and poor alike, to obtain which its great founders gave their life; and to preserve its entirety and its integrity, to prevent a rupture that would have been fatal to the realization of its ideas, its saviors of thirty years ago shed their patriot blood.

If I mistake not, at the bottom of industrial discontent, whose mutterings and moanings create at times vague uneasiness and concern in the business of the country, which flashes out occasionally into revolt, showing fierce tooth and claw, as at Homestead and Chicago, is the feeling, reasonable or unreasonable, that there exists to-day some dangerous dislocation between a real Christianity and American political ideals, on the one hand, and practical existing American Christianity and existing American politics, on the other. A more or less vague idea exists in the minds of American workingmen that capital and wealth have influence with the political machinery of the country, with legislatures and executives, that they do not possess; that monopolies and great corporations can, by corrupt and dishonest methods, so control the conditions of

wealth-getting that enormous and unjust profits accrue to them, out of all proportion to their merits, with total disregard to the rights of those who are dependent upon their pleasure for daily bread. The workingman feels that more and more is the possibility increasing for capital to organize itself into trusts and monopolies, by which the necessities and the luxuries of life may be put at a price which will bring enormous wealth to the beneficiaries of the monopoly and a correspondingly heavy burden upon the people. Believing this, is it to be wondered at that the American workingman organizes in self-defense, that he forms trades unions and labor organizations, of various kinds, for operations, offensive and defensive, against those whom he believes to be hostile or indifferent to his liberties, his rights, his opportunities? Or is it marvelous that the method by which he defends himself should often lack in wisdom, that it should be sometimes violent and often criminal, therein being akin to the methods which have been more than once adopted by his opponents? Truly, the workingman would be much less than human if he never shared in human folly. The question for the American citizen to ask, as he witnesses the growth of this gigantic conflict, should not be "Is the American workingman always justifiable in his choice of weapons?" By no means, since we know that neither he nor his foe are so; but "Has he any just ground of complaint?" And if so, let us who have such especial time for thought and study of these questions show him, if we know any rational, safe means for reaching the root of the trouble.

To those American workingmen who care to listen to me, may I make the plainest possible confession of my political faith, the simplest statement of those principles and methods which are wholly American in spirit, and which need especially to be enunciated and practiced at this crisis, principles which we all have equal need of for the preservation of our rights, for the right-working of the great national institutions which we enjoy by inheritance.

This is the era in the United States of a great movement to secure honest and sound administration. This era began when the civil war closed; when it will end we cannot say; not at least until what we seek be attained. But that the agitation for sound administration, observable throughout the

country, is spreading and strengthening we feel assured. What we want to secure is a perfectly sound political fabric, not a rotten, worm-eaten one, which will not bear the strain of the fierce storms that may come upon it. We want in our legislatures, national, state, municipal legislatures, honest and wise men, men faithful to the people who elected them, not corrupt or foolish men who can be bought by the highest bidder. We need such men in power so that American institutions may resist the attacks made upon them by lawless men who have everything to gain and nothing to lose in times of civil commotion, who imagine they see in law, which should be their protection, and in the representatives of law, enemies to liberty and instruments of oppression. At these they would strike with blind and savage fury. With such anarchists the American workingman has neither part nor lot, for his wages and welfare depend upon stable capital and public security which cannot even exist where the red flag floats. Law, liberty and security are the indispensable conditions of commercial prosperity, and commercial timidity or commercial disaster touch with their blight the wage-earner first. His tiny sails are struck first and fiercest by the ill-wind of financial storm. But there is another form of anarchy with which we, as a nation, are much more likely to be threatened than that which shouts its challenge to our civilization from ignorant and inebriated minds, and, for the most part, in foreign tongues. The anarchy which threw its bombs at the police in Chicago seems juvenile malicious mischief compared to that which illustrated its purpose and methods in the famous, or infamous, oil monopoly of Cleveland, which, by immoral and illegal secret compact with great railways controlling the highways from the oil regions to the markets of the world, stifled an industry on which the prosperity of communities rested, drove towns and cities to desperation in gaining for itself such wealth as imagination can scarcely compute. The oil monopoly, with its merciless destruction of industry in that especial department of business, is but an example of numerous other monopolies which tend to pursue similar purposes by similar methods in every branch of business. Their wealth is so great, running up into untold millions, their advance is so remorseless, uncontrolled by conscience or scruple, that laws, legislatures, courts, colleges and church cannot with-



stand them. I ask not alone workingmen, but all men who believe in the unreserved application of moral principle, of justice and righteousness to all affairs of life, whether the Republic has faced so strong an enemy since slavery fell, if, indeed, in that institution, she faced one as dangerous? Examine the evidence piled up in the reports of State and Federal investigating committees of the practices and results of the great monopolies—Whiskey Trust, Oil Trusts and the like—which has been so effectually marshalled in a notable recent publication, Lloyd's "Wealth Versus Commonwealth," and tell me whether, in this shameless and audacious history, we have not sufficient evidence of a force for evil in the present business world, which, in subtle sagacity, in breadth of operation, in its ramifications of influence, and in the infernal splendor of its designs, is certainly an industrial Lucifer of the first magnitude. It stands to-day as the most astute and majestic enemy of the Republic, already subjecting our institutions to their severest test, as it is testing the gold of an individual and national character, by the severest analysis, in its fiery crucible. It has debauched our politics from the primary to the Senate. It has so long had our legislatures in its pay that their servility has ceased to astonish us. It has swayed our courts, and its shadow still rests upon some of them. Its operations have infused moral malaria into the atmosphere of our entire business world, making men listless and nerveless in the presence of crimes, which, if committed by individuals or in other spheres of life, would have roused them to swift activity. But now we have seen the demand for investigation of corruption charged upon a member of the Senate of the United States voted down under the influence of one great trust; we have seen in that body party interests betrayed openly and shamelessly under the influence of another, exciting, apparently, but little public indignation. Turn to nearly any of the great cities of the country to New York, Chicago, to Philadelphia, New Orleans, Baltimore or others, and you will find the most flagrant violations of all rules of honesty and sound government plotted, executed and persisted in by a corrupt combination of great corporations, great monopolies and a political machine manned by mercenary politicians and commanded by mercenary bosses. We see corrupt councilmen and aldermen, corrupt police force, ill-enforced or unenforced

laws, places of prostitution and liquor saloons in known alliance with the very authorities that should suppress them. We see public franchises of enormous value sold for a song or given away to such corporations by men whom we know to be their creatures, bought with their money. Many of these corporations have a curious, illusive, double nature. They play the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde rôle to perfection. Their presidents and directors are our leading and influential men, prominent in our best society, in our churches, trustees of our hospitals, colleges and charities. But they have a man, or men, well adapted for the purely practical part of their business, who know how to "see" to good purpose legislators and councilmen who have legislative favors to grant. These prominent railroad men, these captains of industry, do not believe in mixing politics and religion, nor do they believe in allowing their ministers to mix religion with politics. They believe in what they call "a pure Gospel," which means impure politics. They do not believe in the simple application of ethics to daily business and political life. If our colleges will not teach such application rigorously, if they will not question the methods by which much of their patrons' wealth has been obtained, they will enormously endow institutions of learning. Such men, if the pulpit will keep silent upon the eccentricities and irregularities of their business methods, will endow churches and support charities by liberal gifts, and send their ministers and their families on excursions at home or abroad. If cities and society will courteously receive them and not look too curiously at the foundations of their fortunes, they will raise statues to great men, enrich art galleries and beautify parks, and in all, perhaps, but in one vital respect, play the part of the generous patron and good citizen.

Anarchy means confusion, chaos, unrepressed violation of law, the overturning of law. Is not, then, this conspiracy between corrupt business and corrupt politics, notwithstanding its elegant veneer, a death's head hidden beneath gems? Is not this, to the impartial judgment, anarchy? Is it not, moreover, the most potent provoker of the conventional anarchy, with which we are so familiar? Have not wage-earners, workingmen and all other true Americans reason to fear it? Is there any David, with shepherd's sling and smooth stone out of the brook, who dares meet this Goliath? Civil

Service Reform, if left free to do its full work, will overcome the champion of the Philistines.

I believe that the spirit of Civil Service Reform and its practical application to our politics by reasonable methods will prove the most fundamental corrective for the evils of which we complain. Civil Service Reform is the name which covers a great principle; that principle is honesty and sound sense in the use of non-political appointive offices. Civil Service Reform rules are the practical application of that principle to politics. Civil Service Reformers ask a very simple and practical thing—that every non-political appointive office in the Union, whether in the Federal, State or municipal service, should be filled in accord with principles of rigid honesty. This reform asserts that all such offices are not concerned with carrying out party policy, but only with an honest and efficient performance of duty, on the part of their incumbents, in the interest of the entire body of citizens for whom that duty is done. To effect this purpose these reformers say a proper and reasonable test should be applied to every applicant for such office, which test should be open and competitive, and fitted to show whether the applicant really possesses the required qualifications or not. Thus, for example, to a person seeking a position the duties of which were astronomical in their nature, questions in astronomy and mathematics would be applied, while to one seeking a humble position—we will say in the labor service of a great city—would be given the most simple and rudimentary form of examination possible, an examination, possibly, which would not embrace any form of book learning, or even writing, but which would simply relate to the applicant's physical strength, his experience and his character. Such an examination might give the applicant a certain preference over others, if he had served his country in the army or navy, and if he had a family to support. I mention these differences in the character of examinations in order to show their complete adaptability to differing circumstances and to meet the criticism often made that they cannot really test practical fitness. Persons who had passed such an examination at the hands of an impartial commission, whether national, state or municipal, would then have their names registered on a list called the eligible list, the list from which men may be chosen. Then the appointing officer,

whether the head of a great national department or the head of a city bureau, when he had a vacant place to be filled, would have the right to choose one from the three highest names on the list to fill it. Then if, for any reason, the person chosen, after trial, proved unsuited to his work, he would be removed and the next on the list substituted, and so on until the right man was found. See how simple, reasonable and practical this plan is, and how wide its application, and how great the advantages flowing from it. 1st, it affords an orderly and systematic way of doing business instead of a disorderly, slipshod way. 2d, it relieves the appointing officer of the intolerable pressure for appointment to which he is subjected by a crowd of importunate and often very unsuitable office-seekers. You know how great this pressure often is at Washington, upon the beginning of a new administration, so that the President and his Cabinet are nearly distracted by it, having no time for their real duties. Under the tyranny of this selfish system, these, the highest executive officers of the government, whose time and energies should be devoted to the consideration of the serious national problems which confront them—questions of finance, of administration, of foreign policy—have been obliged to fritter away much of their time in the ignoble and corrupting practice of dispensing offices; and to do this, moreover, under conditions which usually forbade any full inquiry into the rival claims of applicants, compelling a favorable decision mainly by clamor or by force of partisan service. Do you not see how this system is not alone foolish and unsatisfactory, but that it is, at the bottom, false and dishonest? Its falseness and dishonesty infused themselves into the entire fabric of American politics, not in one sphere alone, but in all. Honest men, men who have strict ideas regarding public duty and public work, have been more and more put to a disadvantage by it. They have found the public service distasteful to them, and, indeed, that it was harder and harder to enter it. Proper protection and rewards were not held out to duty; the sacrifice to conscience, character and independence were too great. Reasonable and honorable party organizations, honorable and inspiring party leadership, such as were observable in the early days of the Republic, were given way to the unscrupulous machine, the unscrupulous boss. These were the conditions, these the men which naturally

invited the alliance of great trusts and monopolies, whose gigantic operations and enormous fortunes, swiftly and dishonorably gained, have alarmed thoughtful men. It was the existence of such evils as these, which had buried their roots deep in the spoils system, drawing their main power and sustenance from it, that led, some twenty-five years ago, Mr. George William Curtis, that purest of American patriots, and with him a corporal's guard of like-minded men, drawn from both parties and from different States, to become aggressive champions of Civil Service Reform. Their weapon against this giant of corruption was apparently as insignificant as that of the Hebrew youth. They said simply make American government perfectly honest in its beginnings, and it will become honest in its ends. Lessen the chances for bad men to control politics by stopping their control of spoils, and good men, finding their work both more inviting and easier to perform, will begin to make their wholesome influence felt in public life. Make the machinery which creates executives and legislatures by controlling nominations true and right, and corruption will of necessity be driven out of executive chambers and legislative halls. Remove from the itching fingers of the political boss the great bribery chest which contains approximately 200,000 salaried Federal offices, not counting the vast number of State and municipal offices, and you will largely have destroyed his power for evil. You will have cut off the motive power which drives his machine.

Through long years of popular indifference and misunderstanding and, in the face of contempt, ridicule and of open and secret opposition of politicians, Mr. Curtis and those about him fought that good fight. A Federal Civil Service Bill was passed, a commission to superintend the details of its enforcement was created. Group after group of appointive offices were brought under the restraining sway of the law. These offices were rescued from the brutal ravage of political spoils-men and restored to the honorable possession of the entire people. Offices have ceased to be coin in the purse of a powerful Senator, or of a party boss, which he may throw to a relative, a favorite or a vassal. Under a fair competition they have become open to the use of all. To-day, approximately, 55,000 out of the 200,000 Federal appointive offices are covered by the Civil Service rules. It is but a question of

time, and of not very long time, when the entire number will be so covered, and when one of the most serious elements of the corruption of American politics will no longer exist. I ask every thoughtful, intelligent workingman if that is not a consummation that he and every other lover of the country must desire.

But Civil Service Reform has another application which is only now beginning to be seriously considered. It is to the administration of our great American cities, in which—for various causes it is not necessary now to discuss—vast populations are centering; where wealth, intelligence, enterprise, commerce and manufactures, the homes of the rich and the poor are focused. Here every question affecting human life and happiness—questions of sanitation, of sewerage, of water supply, of transportation, of public parks and libraries, of taxation, of the care of the poor, assume accentuated importance. To deal intelligently, honestly and economically with these questions requires intelligence, honesty and experience on the part of the public officers, the Mayors and heads of departments to whom they are committed. Every citizen's interest, his health and his happiness, and that of those near and dear to him, are bound up in the right handling of these matters; but, above all others, will the workingman, the wage-earner, the man of slender means, of hand-to-mouth existence, be sensitive to the excellence or folly of the government of the great city in which he lives. A few cents difference in his car-fare may be sufficient to unbalance his small account at the end of the year. A very small rise in the rate of taxation, due to municipal extravagance or dishonesty, will be keenly felt by him. Public advantages, such as free libraries, public parks and the like, to the poor man mean much, while the man of ample means is virtually independent of them. The sanitary condition of the city, of which the rich man is measurably independent by his ability to go elsewhere during the summer, or to obtain at all times protections which are impossible to the poor man, to the latter are matters of vital import. But how is the city to be well governed if the boss and the machine control it, whose interests are selfish interests, who, by an invariable law of their being, will be as selfish and dishonest in their government of the city as the relative indifference and partisanship of its citizens will permit? How can

the city be well governed, I ask intelligent workingmen, whose interests in this question are the interests of us all, only doubly, trebly accentuated, if the 10,000 or 15,000 or 20,000 offices of the city are to be filled by boss and machine, not on proved merit, and held not for faithful performance of duty, but as partisan rewards of the unworthy, and so as to compel partisan service? How, I ask sensible workingmen, can any intelligent and satisfactory city government be conducted on these corrupt and foolish lines? And for the folly of all this, for the pickings and stealings, the losses and blunders, for the costly, unfulfilled contracts, the man who pays most is the workingman. These were the principles which gave us the Tweed ring in New York, with its \$15,000,000 to \$17,000,000 direct theft, its debauched judiciary, its carnival of spoils. It was the spoils system where there should have been civil service reform, which made Tweed and his fellow conspirators possible. This truth he himself confessed, before he died in prison: That unless some way were found to remove the control of patronage of great cities from the grasp of politicians, there would be recurring scandals, such as his.

Civil service reform is the narrow pass where the defenders of good government may mass their feeble strength so that it shall count in value out of all proportion to their numbers. We must make this reform, in our struggle for good government, the Thermopylae of the present crisis.

Cannot the workingmen of America see how, for every good and honorable purpose which they have in view, their influence should be concentrated to establish this reform, in all its practical details, in the administration of our great cities, in whose slums, in whose saloons, in whose brothels, in all these foes to family life and welfare, the roots of corrupt politics find their nourishment. Let them insist upon the passage of a good civil service law in every State legislature, if one does not already exist. Let them apply it to every city of the State, that every smallest office may be removed from the curse of boss patronage, and so that it shall be filled by suitable test. See that a State Civil Service Commission exists in every State to superintend the practical application of the law, a commission with such men upon it as Theodore Roosevelt and his colleagues, and Colonel Procter and Major Harlow have proved themselves to be on the Federal Commission—



honest, experienced, courageous men, who will see that under the law the humblest, least protected applicant gets his rights and a fair chance to show what is in him. See that every city of your State has the same great American principle of justice and fair play, as opposed to privilege, applied to its labor service, just as to-day is in successful operation in the city of Boston, in Cambridge, in New Bedford and in New York and Brooklyn. The same labor system has won the approval of naval officers of high rank in the Federal service.

Let us set to work, then, promptly, practically, to correct the evils of our city government, as of our broader politics, at their source, remembering that "the corruption of the city is the menace of the State." I use the word State not to signify a narrow geographical expression, but the State in its supreme signification—the Nation. Let us, in approaching this great work, understand that even its details can best be mastered by taking, first, a broad view of its entirety. Let us rest our eyes, tired with watching only the complex machinery under our fingers, for a moment on the peaceful blue of a broad horizon. We must go to this great work of American political reform catching the grand inspiration of its ultimate purpose. It is to make America strong for her future work, a larger work than we now surmise, that we struggle. As Mazzini, a weary exile in a foreign land, wrote, reminding the workingmen of Italy, we must not be content with asserting our rights; we must also remember that we have duties to perform—duties to God, to humanity, to the family and ourselves. I emphasize duties in antithesis to rights, not with the intention of trying to persuade any workingman within this land, who asserts rights that he thinks have been withheld from him, to refrain from demanding their recognition. Indeed, I have fully admitted, in the opening part of this address, that I think wrongs of a most serious nature have been perpetrated by unscrupulous capital, acting in conjunction with unscrupulous political machines, on us all, wrongs which should be opened to the full light of day, carefully considered and fully righted; but I believe the most effective way to secure these rights and to cure these wrongs is to approach the whole question from the point of view of duty, to recognize the wrong which is perpetrated upon our entire



country, upon the humanity which it embraces. We must recognize evils, not as inflicted by one class upon another, which will lead us to divide into warring and embittered factions, but we must regard them, if we would be both just and strong, as the product of bad men and bad methods, which do not spring from any one class, and which inflict their injury upon all men and upon a common country. Against an anarchy springing partly from beneath, from ignorant or perverse men, who would overthrow all law to obtain what they misname their rights, and against that anarchy which comes from above, which would draw to itself all wealth by corrupting public life, against these twin foes of the Republic we must unite, not in the spirit of hate, but of love and of duty, on the basis of uncorrupted law and sound political life, with the consciousness of a divine purpose guiding us and of an unselfish labor to perform. Our keenest weapon in the conflict is the spirit of Civil Service Reform and its practical application throughout the range of our public service, and our battle ground is the great cities of America.

## Status of the Civil Service Reform Movement in the District of Columbia.

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By CHAS. W. STETSON.

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The immediate practical object which the Civil Service Reform Association of the District proposed to itself on its formation was the extension of the classified service of the National Government to the municipal offices of the District. The District municipal service comprises about two thousand positions. No law existed applying the tests of merit or fitness to appointments, promotions or removals in this service. It has been the object of the Commissioners of the District in the main to keep the service out of politics. But their situation was often a trying one, and the greater number of appointments made by them in recent years have been in deference to political pressure. Members of Congress who failed to find "berths" for constituents in the national civil service have turned on the Commissioners of the District and demanded that the latter discharge congressional obligations to party-workers by appointments in our municipal service; and worse still, necessary and legitimate appropriations for the District have been imperilled by the reluctance of the Commissioners to barter offices for legislation.

As an instance of the trials to which the Commissioners have been subjected this may be told: Several years ago a newly-appointed commissioner, a republican in politics, found himself mysteriously in possession of a complete list of all the employees of the district government, with the names of the republicans in black ink and the democrats in red, the latter color being used, he conjectured, to signify it was their blood that was wanted. Broad hints as to the proper use to be made of the list were followed by a determined onslaught on him by the so-called local politicians, assisted by their congres-

sional allies, but the commissioner, now an ex-commissioner and a member of our association, sent them away in the same hungry condition as they came in.

The immediate object of the association then was to secure some executive or legislative action which would take the District service entirely out of politics; to strengthen the Commissioners' hands by enabling them to say to congressional and other importunists, "We cannot do what you ask without violating the law." But I need hardly say that the Association conceived itself to have larger reasons for existing than its effort to secure the extension of the classified service to the District municipal offices. We wished to take our part in the great work of creating a public sentiment which shall realize the all-corroding influence of the spoils system on our national life and politics, and to set up in our community a visible protest against the false and vitiating conception, so prevalent yet, that it needs the bribery of office to arouse a healthy interest in political questions. What we may have accomplished towards this end cannot, of course, be accurately determined, but if the increased attention to the general subject of civil service reform in our local newspapers be anything of a test, we have real cause to feel gratified.

Our first effort was to induce the President to extend the provisions of the civil service law to the District by executive order. In this we had the co-operation of the District Commissioners. It was ascertained that the President was inclined to act favorably, but doubted whether the general civil service law gave him authority to deal with the municipal offices of the District. The question was referred by him to the Attorney General, and in the course of the winter the President informed a committee of the Association that the Attorney General held under existing law that the extension could not be made and that legislative enactment would be necessary to accomplish what was desired. The short session of Congress was already far advanced, but a bill was thereupon introduced into the House of Representatives by Mr. Everett of Massachusetts, having for its object the removal of the difficulties supposed to exist in the way of executive action, and this bill was referred to the Committee on Civil Service Reform. Earnest efforts were made by several officers and members of the Association to secure action on it, but the

crowded condition of the House calendar and the indifference of the majority of the members of the Civil Service Reform Committee made it impossible to secure any action. Senator Lodge stood ready to introduce a similar bill in the Senate, but the fruitlessness of our endeavors to secure consideration of the House Bill led us to think it best to postpone the matter to the present long session of Congress.

During the winter the Board of Trade of the District took up the matter of municipal civil service reform. After some discussion a resolution of approval was passed almost unanimously and a committee appointed to co-operate with our Association in an effort to secure proper legislation in this Congress.

The Commissioners, however, have not waited for Congress to act, but have themselves taken a step in the right direction. On June 17th, 1895, this order was issued by them: "All appointments to positions in the District Government shall be made under civil service rules to be adopted and promulgated as soon as practicable." The rules for carrying this order into effect have not yet been formulated for lack of appropriation, but as a declaration of policy which the Commissioners propose to follow in filling positions at their disposal, the order is very encouraging.

A bill enlarging the scope of the Everett bill will be introduced in the House early in the present session; its progress will be carefully watched by the Association and no effort will be spared to secure its passage. If passed by the House and Senate, the Association has every reason to believe it will receive the President's signature.

## Report of the Special Committee

### ON EXTENSION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE RULES AND THE ADOPTION OF RULES FOR THE CONSULAR SERVICE.

In compliance with the following resolution adopted by the Executive Committee of the National Civil Service Reform League at its meeting of September 23. "That a special committee be appointed to report on the additions to the classified service made by the President, with special reference to the order concerning the Consular Service," the Special Committee beg leave to report as follows:

#### EXTENSION OF THE CLASSIFIED SERVICE.

From information published in abstracts of the monthly reports of the Secretary of the New York Civil Service Reform Association it appears that the following extensions of the classified service, and reductions in the list of excepted places within the classified service, have been effected by executive order during the present administration:

BY CLASSIFICATION.	DATES OF EXECUTIVE ORDER.	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES AFFECTED.
POST OFFICE DEPT.:		
Clerks and Post Office Inspectors.....	Nov. 2, 1894	29
Sea Post Office Clerks.....	Dec. 3, 1894	14
		<hr/> 43
TREASURY DEPT.:		
Customs Districts having as many as 20 and less than 50 employees .....	Nov, 2, 1894	647
Employees in Customs Districts having more than 50 employees with compensa- tion of less than \$900.....	Nov. 2, 1894	860
Internal Revenue Service (exclusive of 913 deputy collectors).....	Dec. 12, 1894	2,939
		<hr/> 4,446

By CLASSIFICATION.	DATES OF EXE- CUTIVE ORDER.	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES AFFECTED.
<b>INTERIOR DEPT.:</b>		
Assistant Teachers, Indian Service.....	May 11, 1894	89
Employees at Indian Warehouse, N. Y....	July 25, 1894	2
Pension Agency Clerks.....	July 15, 1895	505
		<hr/> 596
<b>DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE:</b>		
Bureau of American Industry: Inspectors.	May 28, 1894	69
"    "    "    "    "    Microscop-		
ists, 7; Asst. Microscopists, 212; Tag-		
gers, 162; Clerks, 18; Agents, 2; Live		
Stock Agents, 27; Stock Examiners, 113.	May 24, 1895	541
Weather Bureau Messengers, outside of		
Washington .....	May 24, 1895	170
Supt. of Quarantine Station.....	May 24, 1895	2
Supt. of Veterinary Experiment Station...	May 24, 1895	1
Veterinary Inspectors .....	May 24, 1895	4
		<hr/> 787
<b>MISCELLANEOUS:</b>		
Messengers, Watchmen, etc., in Depart-		
ments at Washington .....	Nov. 2, 1894	868
Employees of Government Printing Office.	June 13, 1895	2,710
Firemen in the Departments .....	July 15, 1895	100
		<hr/> 3,678
		<hr/> 9,550
By TRANSFER FROM EXCEPTED TO COMPETITIVE LIST.	DATES OF EXE- CUTIVE ORDER.	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES AFFECTED.
<b>POST OFFICE DEPT.:</b>		
Superintendents, Custodians of Money,		
etc., at Post Offices.....	Nov. 2, 1894	2,267
Steamboat Clerks, Railway Mail Service..	Nov. 17, 1894	25
Transfer Clerks " " " ..	Nov. 17, 1894	139
Superintendents of Post Office Stations at		
which Carriers are employed .....	Jan. 3, 1895	128
		<hr/> 2,559
<b>DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE:</b>		
Appointment Clerk .....	Mar. 20, 1894	1
Professors of Meteorology.....	May 1, 1894	3
All Chiefs and Asst. Chiefs of Divisions..	{ July 9, 1894 } { Mar. 24, 1895 }	44
Topographers, etc., Geological Survey....	Dec. 4, 1894	78
Various Scientific positions, Geological Sur-		
vey.....	July 15, 1895	100
Experts in Washington.....	May 24, 1895	53
Experts outside Washington.....	May 24, 1895	25
Statistical Agents.....	May 24, 1895	20
		<hr/> 324

By TRANSFER FROM EXCEPTED TO COMPETITIVE LIST.	DATES OF EXECUTIVE ORDER.	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES AFFECTED.
<b>MISCELLANEOUS :</b>		
Engineers and Asst. Engineers in the Departments .....	June 25, 1895	40
Bookbinders .....	Sept. 5, 1895	25
Compositors and Pressmen.....	Aug. 16, 1895	100
		<hr/> 165
		<hr/> 3,048

Since these figures were compiled one further extension has occurred, affecting 46 employees of the Department of Labor. There have therefore been added to the competitive list during the present administration, 12,644 positions—9,598 by original classification and 3,048 by transfer from the excepted list.

The additions thus made to the classified service are of high value, and the country may therefore be congratulated upon a very appreciable advance of the cause of Civil Service Reform.

### THE CONSULAR ORDER.

The executive order concerning the consular service is as follows :

“ It being of great importance that the consuls and commercial agents of the United States shall possess the proper qualifications for their respective positions to be ascertained either through a satisfactory record of previous actual service under the Department of State or through an appropriate examination.

“ It is hereby ordered that any vacancy in a consulate or commercial agency now or hereafter existing, the compensation of which (whether derived from salary or from official fees), exclusive from notarial and other unofficial receipts, does not exceed \$2,500, nor fall below \$1,000, shall be filled (a) by a transfer or promotion from some other position under the Department of State of character tending to qualify the incumbent for the position to be filled ; or (b) by appointment of a person not under the Department of State, but having previously served thereunder to its satisfaction in a capacity tending to qualify him for the position to be filled ; or (c) by the appointment of a person who, having furnished the customary evidence of character, responsibility and capacity, and being thereupon selected for examination, is found upon such examination to be qualified for the position.

“ For the purpose of this order notarial and unofficial fees shall not be regarded, but the compensation of a consulate or commercial agency shall

be ascertained, if the office is salaried, by reference to the last preceding appropriation act, and, if the office is not salaried, by reference to the returns of official fees for the last preceding fiscal year.

"The examination herein provided for shall be by a board of three persons designated by the Secretary of State who shall also prescribe the subjects to which such examination shall relate and the general mode of conducting the same by the Board.

"A vacancy in the consulate will be filled at discretion only when a suitable appointment cannot be made in any of the modes indicated in the second paragraph of this order."

This order affects 196 of the 320 positions in the Consular Service at the time it was issued, as follows:

Salaried officers—Consuls and Consuls General—above. \$2,500 53

Salaried officers between \$2,500 and \$1,000:

	CONSULS.	COMMERCIAL AGENTS.	
\$2,500	30	1	31
2,000	52	4	56
1,500	69	6	75
1,000	13	0	13
			<hr/> 175

Feed officers less than \$1,000 (a):

CONSULS.	COMMERCIAL AGENTS.		
9	12	21	196
		<hr/>	

Feed officers below \$1,000 (b). 71  
320

(a). The maximum compensation by fees is \$2,500, and the minimum compensation by salary is \$1,000.

(b). The places that pay less than \$1,000 are generally filled by foreigners or residents of the locality. It is not practicable to extend the new system to them, as the examinations are to be held in Washington.

The following table of subjects on which candidates for consular offices are to be examined has been published:

1. General education, knowledge of languages, business training and experience.

2. The country in which the consul or commercial agent is to reside, its government, chief magistrate, geographical features, principal cities, chief productions, and its commercial intercourse, and relations with the United States.



3. The exequatur, its nature and use.
4. Functions of a consul or commercial agent as compared with those of a vice-consul or consular agent—relation of former to latter, also to the United States Minister or ambassador at the capital of the country.
5. Duties of a consul or commercial agent as regards :
  - a. Correspondence with State Department and the form thereof.
  - b. Passports, granting and viséing.
  - c. United States merchant vessels in a foreign port and their crews, whether seeking discharge, deserting or destitute.
  - d. Wrecks within the jurisdiction.
  - e. Wrongs to United States citizens within jurisdiction.
  - f. Invoices.
  - g. Official fees and accounts.
6. Treaties between the United States and the foreign country.
7. Relations of ambassador and minister to laws of the country to which they are accredited, as compared with those of consul or commercial agent to those of the country where they reside.
8. Acts of ambassador or minister, how far binding upon his country.
9. Diplomatic, judicial and commercial functions of consuls or commercial agents:
10. Piracy, what it is, and where punishable.
11. Consular regulations of the United States (copy of which to be returned to the department) will be supplied to each candidate upon application.
12. Such other subject or subjects as the board may deem important and appropriate in any particular case.

These subjects appear to be well chosen.

The Secretary of State has also appointed a commission to conduct the examinations, which is composed of men thought to be thorough believers in the principles and aims of Civil Service Reform.

All this permits us to hope that, after having in so unequivocal a manner recognized the necessity of improving the consular service by promoting meritorious officers from lower to higher positions, and by subjecting candidates for appointment to comprehensive examinations calculated to test their general intelligence and their knowledge of things which a consular officer should know—an official recognition which is, as such, of great value, the administration will faithfully en-

deavor to secure from the system thus initiated the best possible results. Nor do we doubt that a strict and consistent enforcement of this order would lead to a considerable improvement of the consular service.

But we cordially agree with the Secretary of State, Mr. Olney, when in his letter on this subject addressed to the President he says that the order should be considered as "in no sense final or exhaustive," but rather as a mere "step in the right direction" which "will inevitably lead to a further advance." In the first place, the insufficiency of a mere executive order to secure a permanent improvement in the methods of making appointments to places in the consular service is strikingly exemplified by the history of such executive orders set forth by Mr. Olney in his letter. The executive orders of 1866, 1872 and 1873, requiring all applicants for consular offices to be examined as to their qualifications, were, no doubt, well meant, and attempts were made to put them into execution. There is as little doubt that, had they been faithfully observed, they would have brought about material improvements in the consular service. The reason why they soon fell into complete disuse is very obvious. They were regulations which the appointing power adopted for its own guidance. It kept the machinery for enforcing those regulations under its own control. The same power that had issued those regulations by a mere exercise of its own discretion, could, by a mere exercise of the same discretion, stop their enforcement. The regulations were naturally distasteful to influential politicians, members of Congress or other party leaders, who wished to obtain from the administration appointments to consular offices as rewards for their henchmen. So long as the executive resisted the urgencies of these politicians the regulations were observed. As soon as the Executive yielded to that pressure, the regulations were dropped. And in every instance they were dropped very soon after they had been issued, because the Executive very soon again yielded to political pressure. Even admitting, for the sake of argument, that the present administration may resist that pressure with greater firmness than its predecessors, and that public sentiment demands reforms in the consular service more loudly now than it demanded them at the time when the former executive orders were issued, yet we are not san-

guine enough to hope that members of Congress or other party chieftains will cease to ask for consulships in their hunt for spoils, and that all Presidents and Secretaries of State will henceforth be proof against all pressure coming from their party friends. We see, on the contrary, great reason for apprehending that before very long the present executive order will fall a victim to the same influences which have proved fatal to its predecessors.

In our opinion Mr. Olney, therefore, in the letter to the President recommending the issuance of the order, wisely guarded against its being considered as "final or exhaustive." We presume that he does not mean that it should stand in the way of bills touching the same matter which have been introduced in Congress, but looks for a further advance. The history of the executive orders mentioned proves clearly that this advance, to be lasting in its effect, must come in the shape of legislation. Only when the resistance of the Executive to political pressure is fortified by a law, can it with any degree of certainty be expected to be enduring. We believe, therefore, that the present executive order does not give the friends of reform in the consular service any reason for relaxing their efforts to obtain legislation to that end on the basis of the Lodge and Morgan bills. On the contrary, it should stimulate those efforts, and it is to be hoped that they will have the support of the administration. Such legislation should provide, as far as practicable for open competitive tests of fitness, and place the conduct of the examinations necessary to that end under the control of the National Civil Service Commission; for nothing can be more certain than that just so long as the appointing power reserves to itself the discretion for designating the candidates to be examined, and thus to point out to examiners under its own immediate control the persons it wishes to be found fit—just so long the political pressure and the danger of relapse will continue, and in the same measure there will be popular distrust as to the fairness and impartiality of the proceeding.

Examinations for public employment are not intended only, or even principally, to test the capacity of applicants; they do indeed fulfil incidentally this important and salutary function, but the one peculiar and transcendent merit of fairly conducted competitive examinations is that they furnish,

as nothing else as yet devised furnishes, a real and effective safeguard against the abuse of the powers of appointment and removal for partisan or personal reasons. After all, the vital obstacles to the organization of a faithful and efficient consular service for this country are the frequent desire and established custom among our public men to use such offices as a bait or reward for campaign assistance, or as a means of support for friends and dependents. No proposed remedy for existing evils can be recognized by sincere reformers as genuine and thorough which fails to make this form of bribery and breach of public trust impossible for the future.

(Signed)

CARL SCHURZ,  
CHARLES J. BONAPARTE,  
RICHARD HENRY DANA,  
*Committee.*

**CONSTITUTION**  
**OF THE**  
**National Civil-Service Reform League.**

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**I.**

The name of this organization shall be the National Civil Service Reform League.

**II.**

The object of the National Civil Service Reform League shall be to promote the purposes and to facilitate the correspondence and the united action of the Civil Service Reform Associations.

**III.**

The League shall consist of all the Civil Service Reform Associations in the United States which signify their willingness to become members thereof. Any association hereafter expressing such willingness shall become a member of the League upon its being accepted as such by the League or the Executive Committee. Any member of any such association may be present at any meeting of the League and take part in the debates or discussions as the by-laws may provide.

**IV.**

At any meeting of the League, each association belonging to it shall be entitled to one vote upon every question coming before the League; such vote may be cast by a personal representative designated by each association, or by proxy, as the by-laws may provide. If no such designation be made the delegates from such association present at such meeting, or a majority of them, may cast the vote of such association.

## V.

The officers of the League shall be a President, Secretary, Treasurer and nine Vice-Presidents; and there shall be a General Committee and an Executive Committee. The officers and the committees shall hold office until their successors are appointed or elected.

## VI.

The President and Vice-Presidents shall be elected by ballot at the annual meeting of the League.

The Secretary and Treasurer shall be chosen, and may be removed, by the General Committee.

The General Committee shall be chosen annually, and shall consist of one delegate from each association belonging to the League; and one additional delegate for every two hundred members, or major fraction thereof, of such association as certified by its secretary. Each association shall elect its own delegates in such manner as it may determine.

The members of the Executive Committee shall be ex-officio members of the General Committee.

Any member of the General Committee may act by proxy.

The General Committee shall keep a record of its proceedings, and shall make a report to the League at the annual meeting. A vacancy in any office, except that of Vice-President, may be filled by the General Committee for the remainder of the term.

The General Committee may delegate to the Executive Committee any of its powers; provided, however, that it may at any time resume the powers so delegated.

The Executive Committee shall consist of twenty-one members to be elected annually by the General Committee and shall have power to fix its own quorum. And any member of the Executive Committee may act by proxy.

## VII.

The General Committee may, subject to these articles, manage the affairs of the League, direct and dispose of

the funds, and may, from time to time, make and modify by-laws for the League and for its own action.

No debt shall be contracted, nor shall any appropriation of money be made, by the League or by the General Committee, beyond the amount in the hands of the Treasurer.

### VIII.

There shall be an annual meeting of the League at such time in each year, and at such place as the General Committee may determine, at which officers shall be elected for the ensuing year, and other appropriate business may be transacted.

A meeting of the League may be called at the discretion of the General Committee whenever any association belonging to it notifies the Secretary of the League of its desire to have such meeting, and the President may at any time call a meeting of the League.

### IX.

Any provision of this Constitution may be suspended or amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any meeting of the General Committee, due notice of such proposed suspension or amendment having been given at a previous meeting. Any association belonging to the League may, through its representatives, propose amendments to the Constitution which may be approved under the same conditions.







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# PROCEEDINGS

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF

## THE NATIONAL CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE

HELD AT

PHILADELPHIA, PA., DEC. 10 AND 11, 1896.

WITH THE ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT,

HON. CARL SCHURZ,

AND OTHER MATTERS.

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NEW YORK :

PUBLISHED FOR THE  
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1896.

**PRESS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT.**

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**ANNUAL MEETING**  
**OF THE**  
**NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE.**

**DECEMBER 10 and 11, 1896.**

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Pursuant to call duly issued, the sixteenth annual meeting of the National Civil Service Reform League was held at Philadelphia, Pa., on the 10th and 11th of December, 1896. Among the delegates in attendance during the several sessions were the following :

**BALTIMORE:** Charles J. Bonaparte, John C. Rose, Daniel Coit Gilman, Cleveland P. Manning, Wesley M. Oler, J. I. Cohen, G. Wm. Sattler, George A. Pope, Daniel Miller.

**BOSTON :** Moorfield Storey, Harvey W. Shepard.

**BROOKLINE, MASS. :** Dana Estes.

**BROOKLYN:** William G. Low.

**BUFFALO :** Sherman S. Rogers.

**CAMBRIDGE, MASS. :** Richard Henry Dana, J. G. Thorp, W. W. Vaughan, Morrill Wyman, Jr.

CHICAGO : John W. Ela, W. K. Ackerman.

CINCINNATI : Nathaniel Henschman Davis, Charles B. Wilby.

CONNECTICUT : William A. Aiken, Charles Amos Johnson.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA : John R. Procter, William G. Rice, John Joy Edson, Francis E. Leupp, Frederick L. Sidons, Adolf G. Wolff.

GENEVA, N. Y. : Arthur P. Rose.

INDIANA . Lucius B. Swift.

NEW YORK CITY : Carl Schurz, Silas W. Burt, Theodore Roosevelt, Dorman B. Eaton, Everett Case, Alfred Bishop Mason, William Jay Schieffelin, George McAneny, Charles Collins, William Potts, S. P. Avery, Richard Watson Gilder, Robert Shaw Minturn, Henry Villard, A. S. Frissell, J. H. C. Nevius, George R. Bishop, Horace E. Deming.

*Women's Auxiliary* : Mrs. W. H. Schieffelin, Mrs. Charles Russell Lowell, Mrs. Winthrop Cowdin, Miss Schieffelin, Mrs. Sylvanus Reed.

PHILADELPHIA : Herbert Welsh, Charles Richardson, J. G. Rosengarten, Stuart Wood, James G. Francis, W. W. Montgomery, R. Francis Wood, Edward S. Sayres, Clinton Rogers Woodruff, William Waterall, Dr. John B. Roberts, Joseph Lapsley Wilson.

ST. LOUIS : Henry Hitchcock.

ST. PAUL : Rev. W. R. Lord.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY : John R. Procter, Jr.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY : Henry Mears Stevenson.

YALE UNIVERSITY : Edward E. Garrison, J. M. Gerard.

In response to invitations issued by the League to Municipal Reform Associations, and other bodies having the reform of the civil service among their objects, delegates were present from a number of such organizations as follows :

BOSTON.—*Massachusetts Reform Club* : Andrew Fiske, Samuel Y. Nash.

CHICAGO.—*Municipal Voters' League*: Edwin Burritt Smith.

CLEVELAND.—*Chamber of Commerce*: William E. Cushing.

NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.,—*City Improvement Society*: Mrs. Nicholas Williamson, Mrs. M. H. Hutton.

NEW YORK CITY.—*City Club*: Robert Shaw Minturn.

PHILADELPHIA.—*Civic Club*: Mrs. Cornelius Stevenson, Mrs. J. P. Mumford, Mrs. Matthew Baird, Mrs. Alfred Harrison, Miss Frothingham, Mrs. R. Francis Wood, Mrs. Hampton L. Carson, Mrs. Theodore M. Etting, Mrs. Thomas S. Kirkbride, Mrs. J. P. Lundy, Mrs. Edward Longstreth, Mrs. N. Dubois Miller, Miss Ida Cushman, Mrs. Clinton Rogers Woodruff, Mrs. C. Stuart Patterson, Miss Hallowell, Miss Nina Lea, Miss Mary Channing Wister, Mrs. Charles A. Brinley, Mrs. Charles Richardson, Mrs. W. M. Salter, Mrs. Joseph May, Mrs. R. Blankenburg, Mrs. Chancellor C. English, Miss Jane Campbell, Mrs. William F. Jenks, Mrs. Talcott Williams, Miss Edith Wetherill, Mrs. Leverett Bradley, Mrs. Richard Harte, Miss Frances Clark, Mrs. William Channing Russel, Mrs. E. C. Hewitt.

*Women's Health Protective Association*: Mrs. Anna Townsend Scribner, Miss Elizabeth F. Elder, Mrs. D. Stuart Robinson, Mrs. H. M. Pancoast, Mrs. James Irwin, Mrs. Morris Jastrow, Mrs. Henry L. Childs, Mrs. Charles Richardson, Mrs. William Henry Kennedy, Mrs. J. F. Sachse, Mrs. Finley Acker, Mrs. Walter Erben, Mrs. H. L. Wayland, Mrs. Charles S. Hinchman, Mrs. John R. Whitney, Mrs. Rudolph Blankenburg, Miss Lizzie Esterick, Mrs. Anna M. Green.

*Municipal League*: George Burnham, Jr., Charles Richardson, J. Roberts Foulke, Joseph P. Mumford, John H. Converse, Clinton Rogers Woodruff.

PITTSBURG.—*Citizen's Municipal League*: D. D. Bruce.

WASHINGTON.—*Civic Centre*: Mrs. Frederick L. Siddons.



The morning session of the 10th, commencing at 10.30 o'clock, was occupied by a joint meeting of the General and Executive Committees, held at the Hotel Walton.

At 2.30 o'clock in the afternoon an open meeting of the League was held at the Hotel Walton, at which the President presided, and the following papers were read:

"Civil Service Reform in Philadelphia." Charles Richardson.

"The New System in New York." Hon. Silas W. Burt.\*

"Post-Offices as Party Spoils." Richard Henry Dana.†

"The Self-organizing Power of the American People." R. R. Bowker, (read by Horace E. Deming).

"Lo, the poor Spoilsman: His days numbered in the Indian service." Francis E. Leupp.

"Results of the Merit System in the New York Police Department." Hon. Theodore Roosevelt.

The annual address of the President, Hon. Carl Schurz, "Encouragements and Warnings," was delivered at the Musical Fund Hall, at 8 o'clock on the evening of the 10th. It is as follows:

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## ENCOURAGEMENTS AND WARNINGS.

*An Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the National Civil Service Reform League at Philadelphia, Pa., December 10, 1896.*

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BY HON. CARL SCHURZ.

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THE year which has elapsed since our last annual meeting has been, in various ways, one of extraordinary prosperity to the cause of civil service reform. The recent election campaign has served to exhibit in a singularly clear light some of the remarkable and beneficial changes which the merit system has wrought in our political life, and to expose in their whole futility many of the fallacies, deceptions and superstitions, which the reform movement has had, and, in some measure, still has to overcome.

There are many among us who remember the time when the heads of our larger custom houses, post offices, navy yards, internal revenue offices, and so on, were looked upon as great party potentates responsible not merely for the business conduct of their respective offices, but for the political conduct of the districts over which they held sway—nay, whose political duties were not seldom regarded as paramount to their strictly official functions. I have frequently heard it said that the collector of customs for the port of New York, was second in political importance only to the President of the United States inasmuch as he had to control the politics of the great Empire State, whose vote was usually decisive in presidential elections. It was owing to the political importance of this office that the country had to witness the grotesque spectacle of a United States Senator resigning his place because his advice was slighted in an appointment to the collectorship. The collector of the port of Boston was regarded

as the political representative of the national administration not only for Massachusetts, but for New England, and it was therefore, not deemed requisite, that, although officiating in Boston, he should be a Massachusetts man. Similar offices in Pennsylvania, and in other states were held in similar consideration as partisan satrapies.

The heads of such offices commanded in their subordinates and satellites large and well drilled forces of party workers most of whom owed their official positions and salaries only to their influence or efficiency as political menials. The approach of an election set these forces into feverish activity. At the command of the chiefs they tumbled over each other in their zeal to pack primaries, to secure the election of reliable delegates to conventions, to serve as drummers or shouters in such bodies, and during the campaign to get up meetings, to arrange demonstrations, and to manufacture enthusiasm. While all this was going on, the public business was a matter of secondary consideration. It may be doubted whether it was a matter of first consideration at any time. The election over, the great chiefs presided over the distribution of the spoil—a business requiring much attention, work, and ingenuity. In the meantime the preparations began for the next campaign in the way of setting up pins and laying wires. So it was from the beginning of the office term to the end—politics with official business by way of incidental interruption—and frequently a very unwelcome and irksome interruption, too.

Does not this sound like a reminiscence of days long, long past? There are probably in the city of New York many otherwise well informed citizens, taking a lively interest in public affairs, who do not to-day even know the name of the collector of the port—not as if that gentleman were not an excellent officer, but *because* he is an excellent officer, devoted solely to his official duties, and not meddling with public affairs beyond those duties. He not only does not consider it to be a part of those duties to send out the employees of the Custom House to look after the primaries, or caucuses, or conventions, or to run campaigns, but he would be more apt to reprove such things as “pernicious political activity” and punish it, especially if it in any manner interfered with the official business of the employees in question. It is even quite probable, if not absolutely certain, that about the political

associations of many of his men he knows nothing and cares nothing, but that he is interested only in the weighers weighing, the gaugers gauging, the inspectors inspecting, the accountants accounting, and so on, and in their conducting themselves before and after office hours as respectable persons and good citizens.

Far from being an exceptional case, this has so much become the rule that the re-appearance of the old practice anywhere would be a public scandal. I do not mean to say that the service in this respect is in an ideal condition, and that there are not sporadic cases of officers or employees of the national government still too much given to partisan activity. But these expose themselves not only to unfavorable criticism on the part of the public, but also to the danger of being severely disciplined by their superiors. Surely our custom houses, post offices, revenue offices, navy yards, and so on, have thoroughly ceased to be mere barracks for the housing and feeding of the janissaries of the ruling political party, who are to be let loose on the community as the exigencies of party interest might require. This we owe altogether the introduction of the merit system. In making those offices what they now are—business establishments in the conduct of which business principles are the ruling motive power—it has not only given the people a more honest and more efficient service, but it has also made a vigorous beginning of that moral reformation of our political life, which is its ultimate and its most important object.

How persistently have the adherents of the spoils system been telling us that the reform of the civil service we proposed, was incompatible with democratic institutions, because without the organization of regular party troops on the spoils basis, and without the incentive of the spoils of office in prospect it would be impossible to keep alive the popular interest in public affairs! And how completely and conclusively has since the introduction of the merit system each successive presidential election refuted that slander upon the character of the American people! In no instance, however, has this refutation been more striking than it was in the election just behind us. A campaign more earnest we have never had. The number of citizens with whose earnestness the possession of office or the hope of spoil had anything to do, was no doubt un-

precedentedly small. But I shall hardly be contradicted when I say that the party most earnest in its work and most active and enthusiastic in its efforts, was the one which fought without any prospect of a partisan victory and into whose hopes the winning of office or other selfish advantage did not enter in the slightest degree.

I mean the sound money Democrats, for whom the struggle had no victory but the victory of the cause which they believed to be the cause of the national honor and welfare. Truly, the slanderers who asserted that it requires the promise of reward in the shape of official spoil to inspire Americans with an earnest interest in the affairs of their country and to stimulate them to patriotic exertion have never more impressively been put to shame, and their disgraceful pretence ought not to be heard of again. It is a significant fact that those whose zeal in the late campaign was most conspicuously unselfish, put forth the most emphatic pronouncement in favor of civil service reform, while the party whose cause was condemned by the verdict of the American people, was the only one which sought to inspirit the efforts of its adherents by opening to them the prospect of unlimited official plunder.

I am, of course, very far from asserting that civil service reform played an important part in the late campaign as a political issue. The popular mind was absorbed with other things. But I do say that spoils politics suffered a double defeat in the election: The party to whose cause and to whose prospects the spoils idea was most foreign proved itself in political action the most enthusiastic and efficient, while the party which invoked the spoils spirit to its aid, found the promise of spoils utterly impotent to avert its discomfiture.

This moral triumph, however, is by no means the only auspicious event upon which we may congratulate ourselves. The hope expressed a year ago that President Cleveland would, as to the extension of the classified service so far as it could be effected by executive action alone, leave to his successors but little to do, has been fully justified. The executive order promulgated by him on May 6th, 1896, marks one of the greatest and most important onward strides in the history of the reform movement. This order added to the classified service and subjected to the merit system at one stroke of the pen more than 40,000 places, so that the number of posi-

tions in the national service placed under the civil service rules, which was 15,000 under President Arthur twelve years ago, has now risen to nearly 90,000, while the number of excepted places in the branches of the service covered is reduced to less than 800. That order provided for promotion examinations in all the departments. It put an end to the old controversies as to whether such positions as those of chiefs of division in the government departments, and of deputies of various sorts, could or should be entirely withdrawn from the reach of party politics, and it dispersed the charm by which certain places of a very ordinary sort were sought to be consecrated to the spoils idea by simply calling them "confidential." That order condensed the large and somewhat confused aggregation of civil service rules which in the course of time had accumulated, into a simple, clear and practical code. And—more than all this—that order established the general principle that it is the natural and normal status of persons serving under the executive departments of the national government to be under the civil service rules—in other words, that it shall not require a special edict to put them there, but that they shall be considered and treated as being there unless exempted by special edict.

What this is worth only those will fully appreciate who, during these long weary years of struggle, have witnessed the ingenuity displayed by the spoils politicians in conjuring up difficulties to every extension of the merit system, and the tricks and stratagems employed in changing the names and in mixing up the duties of various offices, and in other disreputable ways, to steal places already classified, from the realm of the merit system for the benefit of the spoilsmen. All this is now over in the national service; the merit system is unequivocally recognized as the general rule, and, I am sure, I am speaking the sentiment of every member of this League and of every sincere friend of good government in the country when I say that, had he never done anything else to advance it, the name of President Cleveland would for this order of May 6th alone for ever stand pre-eminent in the annals of the civil service reform movement.

Nor should we fail gratefully to remember the valuable services rendered by the National Civil Service Commission, which has proved itself conspicuously faithful, judicious, and

efficient, and the loyal enforcement of the law in the several Government departments, especially that of the Post Office, which has resolutely sought to rescue the country Postmaster from the reach of spoils politics, and that of Agriculture, which has carried the domain of the competitive rule to the very top of its organization.

It is not only in the national service that we find evidence of gratifying progress. The establishment and maintenance of the merit system in the various State and municipal governments is next in importance. The complete expulsion of the spoils spirit from the national service can hardly be expected so long as that spirit is kept alive and fostered in the services of our states and municipalities. As you are aware, the constitution of the State of New York contains a clause making the introduction of the competitive merit system in the service of the State and municipalities obligatory. That the genius of the spoils politicians in New York—for there are such in that community—should at once have applied itself to the task of circumventing that constitutional provision, you will readily believe without the production of affidavits. But there are judges in Israel, and the Court of Appeals, the highest tribunal in the State of New York has construed the civil service section of the constitution according to its meaning and intent, holding that the constitutional provision is self-executing, and that, while the existing civil service statutes may be used so far as they go in enforcing it, the courts would be obliged even in the absence of such statutes to pronounce all appointments made without competitive examinations to positions for which competitive examinations are practicable, to be illegal. This decision has been practically enforced by the competent authorities refusing pay to persons who had, according to the Court of Appeals, been illegally appointed. The spoilsmen, finding this to be serious business, for their favorites for whom they attempted to steal places dislike as much to serve for nothing as their patrons are loath to pay salaries out of their own pockets, have now conceived a new plan of campaign, of which I shall speak later.

In the mean time Mr. Morton, the Governor of New York, mindful of his constitutional obligations, and having learned from practical experience the value of the merit system, instructed the State Civil Service Commission to prepare for his

consideration a revision of the classification and of the rules that would carry into full effect the constitutional mandate as construed by the Courts. The new classification and the revised rules have recently been promulgated by the Governor who by this act entitled himself to that honor which a public duty well performed deserves. It is no exaggeration to say that this is the completest embodiment of the civil service reform idea so far attempted in any State.

In the city of New York, too, the Mayor, Mr. William L. Strong, has greatly extended the operation of the civil service rules, excepting only 75 positions in a total number of about 15,000, and confining the exceptions to deputies, private secretaries, and a few professional places.

Also in the cities of Buffalo and Rochester there has been decided progress, while in the city of Brooklyn whose Mayor belongs to that class of reformers who approve of the merit system in theory, but would rather not be bothered with it in practice, the Courts have had to be invoked to secure proper respect to the constitutional mandate. A test case is now pending.

Especially gratifying is the triumph recently won by the sturdy mayor of Baltimore, Mr. Hooper, over the Republican spoils politicians of that city who had sought to turn into a carnival of plunder last year's victory of the reform movement, overthrowing the Democratic machine. The reformers have, indeed, failed to carry a general civil service law through the Maryland Legislature, but a constitutional provision, similar to that of New York, is to be voted upon by the people next year.

In my last annual address I had to deplore the fact that in Massachusetts a vicious blow had been struck at the merit system by the passage of a bill, over the governor's veto, providing that veterans should be appointed without any examination whatever to any vacant place for which they might apply—a bill no less obnoxious to the self-respect of the veterans than to the public interest. But the Supreme Court declared the law unconstitutional, basing its decision upon the old Bill of Rights which discountenances class privileges. Thereupon the legislature has passed another veteran bill continuing the provision of the previously existing law, which merely *permits* the appointing officers to appoint veterans



without examination if they deem such appointments proper. This act the Supreme Court has held to be constitutional.

In Pennsylvania, too, the adoption of a civil service law is in prospect. A committee of the Civil Service Reform Association has drafted a bill, and that bill has been substantially endorsed by the Republican State Committee as well as the State Convention of the same party. Let us hope that it will pass unscathed the snares and pitfalls of legislative action and place this old commonwealth in the front rank of reform States. Civil service bills are also likely to be introduced this winter in the legislatures of Minnesota, where a bill presented by Senator Ozmun passed at least one House at the last session, and in Colorado where the civil service reform cause has the advantage of strong and active sympathy among the women voters.

Nothing could be more encouraging than the fact that in several States the people of individual cities, without waiting for general acts of legislation, have secured civil service reform by means of amendments to their charters. In Louisiana the city of New Orleans has obtained a charter embodying provisions for the application of strict civil service rules to every municipal department. In Seattle and Tacoma, the principal cities of the State of Washington, in the extreme Northwest of the country, similar rules have been placed in the charter by popular vote. Evanston in Illinois has also adopted the merit system by a vote of the people under the provision of the Illinois State act, thus following the example of Chicago. In San Francisco and Los Angeles, California, in Wheeling, West Virginia, in Galveston, Texas, in Denver, Colorado, and in St. Louis, Missouri, steps have been taken toward the same end.

Thus North and South and East and West, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Rio Grande to the Northern frontier, the seed of the reform sentiment which so long seemed to have been sown in vain, is vigorously pushing and promising a harvest which not a few years ago was beyond the most sanguine flights of expectation.

But let us not indulge in the delusion that what has been gained can be preserved intact and that more can be won without a continuation of incessant watchfulness and militant effort. The tactics of the spoils politicians have indeed changed from the direct to the indirect attack. The theoretical argument

against civil service reform has in a great measure ceased to be resorted to. The merit system has so conspicuously commended itself by its practical results to the enlightened opinion of the country, as to make the old objections to it appear simply foolish or spiteful. When we are now told that our competitive examinations may indeed exhibit the scholastic acquirements of a candidate for place, but not his practical business capacity, his industry, or his aptitude as a worker, the overwhelming answer is found in the established fact, that wherever the competitive system has been properly carried out, it has immeasurably improved the service in its practical efficiency. When we are told that our competitive examinations can, in any event, not prove the moral qualifications of the candidate, his truthfulness, his honesty, we can point to the unquestionable fact, that many thousands of places have for many years been filled under the merit system, and that in the places so filled the number of cases of dishonest conduct has been infinitesimally small. When the threadbare objection is repeated that our competitive examinations will give an undue advantage to college-bred men and exclude the humbler classes of the people, the statistical showing presents itself that since the competitive system was introduced in the national service, only a little more than twelve per cent. of the men appointed under it were college-bred men, and outside of the places demanding scientific acquirements hardly more than six per cent.—that in fact the service is more open than ever to persons of the so-called humbler classes. And so we might go through the whole list of the hackneyed criticism, and at every step the theoretical objector would find himself utterly discomfited by the evidence of practical experience.

The argumentative fight against civil service reform has, therefore, very largely ceased. It is true that this year for the first time since the enactment of the national civil service law, a national convention of one of the great political parties, that held at Chicago, made in its platform an attack upon the merit system. But nobody will maintain that this attack bore any vestige of a reasoned motive. The pretence of that platform, and of Mr. Bryan as its expounder, that there is "a life tenure being built up at Washington which excludes from participation in the benefits the humbler members of society," simply flies in the face of well-known fact. And the demand

for "fixed terms of office," which meant nothing else than that not only the places heretofore usually changed with a change of party in power, but the classified service, too, should be thrown open to a general spoils debauch every four years—this demand was in fact like a mere war whoop of Goths and Vandals preparing for the assault of a town and eager for the loot. It is according to the eternal fitness of things that of national conventions, this should have been in our days the only one to characterize itself by such an utterance. The barbarous foray has happily been averted, and a repetition is not likely ever to occur.

The dangers threatening civil service reform come no longer from open assault upon the merit system, but from insidious attempts to destroy its substance, while preserving its forms. You may hear many a politician who all his life has trained with the old spoils guard, now deliver himself in this wise: "Civil service reform? Certainly. An excellent thing. But it should be practical civil service reform. Examinations? Certainly. But they should be sensible, practical examinations. The trouble is, these professional civil service reformers do not know how to manage this business. They are mere theorists, one-sided, unpractical, unreasonable fanatics. In one word, whether they call themselves Republicans or Democrats, they are Mugwumps. They ought to be reformed themselves. And we can do it. We are the men to give the country the reform it wants. Let us have an opportunity to try our hands at it." And with this preface various schemes are proposed that may appear plausible to the unwary. But when the Greeks come bearing gifts, it behooves us to keep our eyes open.

In order clearly to gauge and to appreciate the character of such designs, it is expedient that we should at all times keep before our eyes the essential principles, without the observance of which no true reform of the civil service is possible. There are certain things which cannot be repeated too often. The object of civil service reform is twofold: to improve the character and efficiency of the public service, and, by the abolition of the spoils system, to elevate the intellectual and moral character of our political life. To attain either part of this object, the very first and absolutely imperative requirement is that office cease to be an article of patronage, a

thing to be bestowed by way of arbitrary personal or political favor and, therefore, that appointments to office be made *exclusively* upon the ground of impartially ascertained fitness for the discharge of official duty.

The exclusion of favoritism evidently requires that in making selections for appointment personal or political influence count for nothing; and this can be accomplished only if such selections are made according to *the degree of fitness* respectively shown by the different candidates. This again requires two things—first, that whatever tests for the ascertainment of that fitness be established, they be, as a rule, accessible to all persons possessing certain qualifications as to good repute, and, perhaps, as to age and physical condition; and, secondly, that those tests be competitive; that is to say, that the candidates showing themselves best qualified shall have the best claim for appointment. The competitive feature of these tests is, therefore, not to be looked upon as something merely desirable for this or that practical reason; but it must be regarded as the most essential prerequisite, as the absolute *sine qua non* of the merit system. Without it there will be no exclusion of favoritism from appointments; and without this there will be no true and lasting civil service reform—at least not in a country in which the spoils system has prevailed and formed part of the political habits of the people.

There is here and there in the popular mind—even among those who on the whole favor the merit system—a lack of appreciation of just this point. We still hear reasoning like this: “You wish the public service to be conducted on business principles. Now, would not any practical business man be better satisfied with some less restrictive method of ascertaining the qualifications of those he has to employ? Will he not be the best judge of those qualifications? Will he limit the freedom of his choice by any competitive system?” The answer is simple. Yes, we do wish the public service to be conducted on sound business principles. But we have to recognize the fact that in one respect the situation of a public officer wielding the appointing power is essentially different from that of a private business man. The public officer is exposed to a peculiar pressure of political influences and importunities of which the private business man knows

nothing. Of this pressure only those have a just conception who have actually experienced it.

It is a remarkable fact that many men in politics who are otherwise always mindful of the public interest, seem to lose all sense of responsibility whenever the patronage comes into question. I do not speak here of the professional spoils monger who makes the providing of places for his henchmen or the building up of a party machine his principal business in public life. But I speak of men ordinarily conscientious in their conduct who will, perhaps moved only by the generous desire to help or please, or sometimes only to get rid of importunity themselves, not merely perfunctorily recommend and even earnestly and persistently urge the appointment of—pardon the vulgarism—the veriest “deadbeats” to positions requiring not only superior ability but a nice sense of honor. From my own official experience I might quote instances which would make you stare. There seems to be something in the pursuit of office, either for oneself or for others, that benumbs all moral feeling as to means and ends, and tempts men to do things which they would in private life be ashamed of, and to make common cause with persons whom they would not socially recognize as fit to associate with. There are, of course, some public men who will never propose anybody for office of whose worthiness they are not personally convinced. But, alas, they are in the minority. On the whole, I feel myself warranted in saying that recommendations for office generally are among the most untrustworthy, aye, the most treacherous of human utterances, even if signed or spoken by men otherwise ever so respectable.

From this incessant, imperious, and deceptive pressure which forces itself mercilessly upon the appointing officer, the private business man is wholly exempt. In selecting his employees he is permitted to act upon his best judgment, while the appointing officer in the public service is not. Resistance to the constraining forces bearing down upon him requires a firmness of purpose and a fearlessness of consequences which but few public characters have proved themselves possessed of. His freedom to make his selections for appointment according to his sense of duty and his knowledge of the requirements of the service, of which we hear so much, is therefore a myth. In a large majority of cases, if apparently left free, he himself

does not make those selections at all, but they are made for him and forced upon him by political influences with the impelling motives of which the public interest has ordinarily nothing to do. And you may be assured that most of those who clamor to have the appointing officer entirely free in his choice, do so only because they wish to make him their slavish tool. What they are struggling for is their own freedom to impose their choice upon him. Against these incessant efforts to enslave him to influences foreign to the public interest the appointing officer needs protection; and that protection he can find only in a law, or in a rule having the force of law, which restricts the choice to a limited number of candidates found most fit for the performance of official duty by impartial test.

Will this protection be given—in other words, will favoritism be excluded, by non-competitive, mere pass examinations, in which a minimum of requirements is established and the choice is from all the candidates whose proficiency is above that minimum? This question is answered by long and varied experience. There were such examinations in the government departments in Washington many years before the enactment of the civil service law, without in any appreciable degree affecting the evils of the spoils system. Why was this the result? In the first place, those examinations were not open to all qualified persons. Only candidates designated for that purpose were admitted. Who designated such candidates? In name the appointing officer; in fact the politicians of influence who wanted places for their favorites. Thus favoritism entered into, nay, controlled the proceeding before the examination began. If several candidates for the same place passed above the minimum requirement, who received the appointment? Not the man who had passed highest but he who was selected—in name by the appointing officer, in fact by the politician who had the largest influence. Thus favoritism controlled the consummation of the proceeding. I will not say that it absolutely always happened so; but it was the rule, and exceptions were rare. Is it a wonder that the spoils system with all its scandals flourished under this system without substantial restraint?

I am well aware that under certain conditions such pass-examinations may be made to do good service. Given a

small number of places to be filled, one at a time—places requiring certain specific qualifications of a superior order—and then given an appointing officer of moral courage and firmness in resisting pressure, and even this scheme may work well. It has, for instance, brought forth some good fruit with regard to the consular service under the present administration. This is gratefully acknowledged. But have we any assurance that it will steadily continue to bear good fruit? We should not forget that rules to govern appointments to consular places very similar to those at present in force, had been introduced before and had fallen into abeyance. They were revived again and again, but have heretofore always, after a short period of observance, become useless by the failure of the appointing power to resist the political pressure hostile to them. Is it not to be feared that what has happened before, may happen again—that, while these rules may work beneficially under the present administration and under the next, the time will come again when, with a less vigorous will-power in the Presidential chair, the wave of influence will wash down the feeble breakwater of the pass-examination once more? Secretary Olney was therefore entirely right when he characterized the present rules covering the consular service as only a “step in the right direction,” which, as we hope, will before long be followed by a measure of reform bottomed upon the competitive principle and thus offering greater guarantees of consistency and endurance.

But even if the system of pass examinations could be maintained in successful working when applied only to a small number of conspicuous positions, it would under our conditions inevitably and speedily become worthless, a mere cloak for arbitrary favoritism and spoils politics, when applied to the thousands upon thousands of places in the national service which are less in the public eye, and even with the smaller number under our state and municipal governments. Actual experience in this respect is so general and uniform as to extinguish all doubt. There is no teaching of history and no process of reasoning that will not unfailingly lead us to the conclusion that the element of favoritism and of spoils politics can be excluded from the public service at large only by the establishment and maintenance of competi-

tive tests to which every qualified person has free access, and which secure to the best merit properly demonstrated the best title to appointment.

The competitive principle, I repeat, is the very soul of civil service reform. Without it there can be no true merit system on a large scale. Without it every reformatory attempt of a general nature will eventually become a sham and result in failure. I am sure I am not going too far in saying that whenever you find a man who presents himself as a friend of civil service reform, but who stops short of the competitive principle as a general rule admitting but few exceptions, you have before you one who is either ignorant of the fundamental principle, or a pretender with evil designs. And whenever political parties or politicians speak of reforming the civil service and offer to that end a general measure of legislation not containing the competitive rule, you may set them down as either deceiving themselves or as seeking to deceive the people.

There is another essential point which must never be lost sight of. The conduct of the competitive examinations should present every possible guarantee of impartiality and should therefore be independent of the appointing officers, that is to say, out of the reach of the pressure of political influence to which the appointing officers are exposed. In other words, while the President of the United States, or the Governor of a State, or the Mayor of a city may exercise the power of determining the rules under which the competitive examinations are to be conducted, and of appointing the persons who are to conduct them, those persons, when so appointed, should, in conducting those examinations, not be subject to be directed or influenced by the officers by whom, or for whose departments of the service, the appointments are to be made. For, if they were, the impartiality of their action would in many cases be gravely endangered, and in many more cases be generally suspected.

To illustrate this point you will pardon me for relating what is at present said to be going on in New York. I have mentioned the fact that the Constitution of that State makes the introduction of the competitive merit system in all branches of the service obligatory; that the Court of Appeals has given the broadest construction to that constitutional



mandate, that public employees appointed in contravention of that mandate are deprived of what their hearts most yearn for, their pay, and that therefore the soul of the spoils politician is seriously disturbed. He has to deal with the fact that the competitive examination cannot be gotten out of the way. But he does not despair. His inventive genius is equal to the emergency. To him the problem is simple. What does the spoils politician care whether the competitive system controls the appointments if he can get control of the competitive examinations? The party machine hopes to coerce Governors and Mayors into putting machine men at the head of the different departments of the service—places not subject to competitive examination. It has succeeded with this coercion so often that it may hope to succeed again. Why not, then, transfer the conduct of the competitive examinations from the general State Commission appointed by the Governor, and from the city commissions appointed by the Mayors, who took the competitive business more or less seriously, to the different departments of the service, at the head of many of which the party machine hopes to have its tools? The constitutional mandate will then, in point of form at least, be complied with. There will be competitive examinations. The courts will have nothing more to say. But what a roaring farce these competitive examinations would become under the control of examiners chosen, for instance, by the present State Superintendent of Public Works in New York, who has made it one of his favorite studies, how to “beat” the civil service law, or by that member of the Charities Board in New York City, who loudly advocates the transfer of the examinations because under the present system he “cannot get the men we want!”

The ostensible reason for such a transfer will undoubtedly be that the heads of departments know best what qualifications are required for the positions under them, and that they are therefore best fitted to adapt the examinations to those requirements. This is plausible but futile under our circumstances. It is a matter of universal experience that the heads of departments are most severely subjected to pressure for changes in their force immediately after their accession to office, that is to say, when in an overwhelming majority of cases they are least acquainted with their own duties and

least fitted to form a clear judgment of the qualifications their subordinates should have. I speak here from my own experience, for I have gone through it all. Another one of my personal observations may be of equal interest. I have known several heads of public departments who were indifferent, or even hostile, to civil service reform when they went into office but became thorough converts to it before they had been there long. Some of them frankly confessed to me that, had they had their way at the beginning of their respective administrations, they would have freely used their power of appointment to take care of their supporters, to oblige their friends, and to look out for their party; that they would have yielded to the pressure for place, sometimes willingly, sometimes because they could not resist it; that they chafed at the civil service rules restraining them; that, had they been permitted, they would gladly have disregarded them; but that as they gained better knowledge of their duties and of the requirements of the service under them, they became aware how discreditable to themselves and how hurtful to the public interest would have been the things they had at first wished to do, and that they could never be too grateful to the civil service rules for having saved them from ignorantly or improvidently falling into errors, the consequences of which would have plagued them throughout their whole administration.

Here I speak, of course, only of public officers to whom, their early misconceptions notwithstanding, the public interest was the supreme consideration. But what will happen if men who persist in regarding public place as the mere spoil of party warfare, and their official power as a legitimate means for serving the "machine," are put at the head of public departments and entrusted with the management of civil service examinations? Can there be the slightest doubt that they would eagerly embrace every opportunity to disembowel the merit system, to make sport of the examinations, to give the freest possible play to spoils politics, behind the empty forms of the competitive rule, and to make the constitutional mandate a laughing stock for the "boys"? If anybody doubts, let him consider what has already happened. Last year the majority of the Fire Commission of New York city was composed of men of the spoils persuasion. Owing to the watchfulness of the City Civil Service Board they failed, in spite of

their efforts to circumvent the civil service rules, in "getting the men they wanted." They forthwith engineered through the Legislature a bill turning over the management of the civil service examinations for the Fire Department to the Fire Commission itself. What they aimed at was no secret. The bill failed to become a law in consequence of some peculiar provisions of the State Constitution concerning bills relating to cities. Meanwhile, the majority of the Fire Commission has fallen into the hands of men who are not given to spoils politics, but are true to the public interest. These men are perfectly satisfied with the control of the examinations by the City Civil Service Board, and protest emphatically against the transfer of that control to the department on the very ground that, in the long run, it would mean a return to the spoils system. The same opinion is expressed by other heads of departments for the same reason. Here is the object lesson.

Will it be said that men may be put at the head of the departments who will be as conscientious in the management of the examinations as the independent Civil Service Boards? The answer is that if the examinations are put under the control of the departments the chances for spoil are increased and the spoils politicians will make redoubled efforts to secure the chief places for men who will do their bidding. On the other hand, the more the departments are stripped of the chance for spoils the more they will lose in interest to the spoils politicians, and the easier will it be to put them under the control of men who look only to the public interest.

I am, therefore, not going too far when I say that this scheme of transferring, in whole or in part, the management of the examinations from the independent Civil Service Boards to the departments means a deliberate attempt to destroy the substance of the merit system while preserving some of its forms, and that it has no other purpose than to return to the old spoils practices. No Legislature can pass a bill embodying such a scheme or anything akin to it, and no Governor can sign such a bill, without becoming responsible parties to this plot. I call upon all friends of good government in the country to watch with keen attention the developments which are likely to take place this winter in the State of New York. If they hear of the introduction in the Legislature of such a bill as I have described they will understand what it means.

It is the duty of this League to see to it that, if such an attempt is made, the responsibilities which it involves shall not escape the judgment of the American people.

Neither should the friends of good government in those States in which civil service laws are in preparation permit themselves for a moment to overlook or to underestimate the universal experience that, unless bottomed on the competitive principle, no civil service reform will be lastingly effective, and that unless made independent of the control of the appointing officers, no system of competitive examinations can maintain its integrity. Our duty to our cause demands that we should be careful not to let anything pass as true civil service reform that does not answer its essential requisites.

The rapid progress of our cause during the last few years has not only gladdened its friends, but also exasperated its enemies. Until a recent period the spoils politicians have looked upon the civil service reform movement as a mere whimsey of theorists which would have its day and then pass by. They have at last become aware that it is a substantial force seriously threatening to annihilate their trade, unless effectively checked. They will be incessantly busy, if they cannot hope to overthrow it by open assault, to destroy it by a warfare of underground sapping and mining. And this warfare will not cease until the victory of civil service reform is complete—that is to say, until the whole public service, national, State and municipal, excepting only the few distinctly political offices, has been taken out of politics by being brought under the merit system, and until this general rule of the merit system has become so fully identified with the political habits and ways of thinking of the American people as to exclude altogether the old idea of public office as the spoil of party victory from our party contests.

True, this is a large programme. But why should not that which has been actually accomplished elsewhere be possible here? As a remnant of feudalism, as a monarchical and aristocratic institution, the distribution of public offices as mere patronage, the spoils system, flourished in England as much as here. Owing to the progress of the democratic idea in government in England the patronage abuse has been completely supplanted there by the democratic merit system, as it is gradually being supplanted here. In consequence of this, the

idea of public office being a matter of patronage or spoil—aye, almost the very memory of that idea—has completely disappeared from politics in England, while party struggles are there as vigorous as ever. Thus, the consummation has actually been reached there, proving that it can be done. Let us measure the distance which still separates us from the goal.

Of the public servants under the national government who should still be put under civil service rules the minor postmasters are the most important class. Of these there are about 67,000. Nothing has done so much to keep the spoils idea alive in the popular mind as the change of the village postmaster with every change of party in power. Nothing will do more to disinfect the popular mind of the spoils idea than the taking of the village post office out of politics. Nothing has brought more torment and trouble, socially and politically, often amounting to political ruin, to members of Congress than the use of the village post office as their personal patronage. And there is nothing, it seems, for which the ordinary member of Congress is more determined to fight, even with complete disregard of the public interest, than for the privilege of appointing the village postmaster. Of this the defeat in Congress of Postmaster-General Wilson's reform proposition, which I mentioned in my last annual address, furnished a striking illustration.

The plan adopted by Postmaster-General Wilson, pursuant to an executive order amending the postal regulations, contemplates the consolidation of smaller and contiguous post offices with the free delivery offices in such manner that, when such a consolidation has been effected, the smaller office becomes a mere station and its postmaster a superintendent or clerk, as the case may be, and he is, together with his subordinates, if he has any, brought within the classified service. Under this plan the Postmaster-General during the year 1895, actually effected about a hundred consolidations, which resulted not only in a very considerable simplification and improvement of the service, but also in an annual saving of \$43,000. But to enable him to extend this reform the Postmaster-General needed the transfer of funds from the appropriation for postmaster's salaries, to that for clerk hire. This required Congressional action. The Postmaster-General applied for it. He explained the scheme in an elaborate letter to Mr. Loud, the

chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads of the House of Representatives. He indicated that during his administration of the post department the consolidation of a few thousand post offices might be effected. He did not ask for more money; he asked for less. He recommended that two millions of dollars be taken from the appropriation for the salaries of postmasters, and that in place of this an increase of only one and one-half million be added to the appropriation for clerk hire—a clear saving of \$500,000.

Well, what happened? Of course, Congress jumped at the chance of saving this sum—a sum certainly not to be despised in this time of harrassing deficits, when every dollar counts? Of course, Congress made haste to encourage the Postmaster-General in such a measure of economy, which, at the same time, was shown to be of great benefit to the efficiency of the service? Oh no, Congress did not jump at the chance. The plan was received with chilling aversion. In vain was the Postmaster-General's plea that the extensive realization of the plan would strengthen and improve the postal organization by introducing competent local supervision, responsibility and control; that it would insure a prompter and more intelligent accounting for public funds with less bookkeeping, less correspondence, fewer requisitions for supplies, and less call for inspection from the department; that it would increase and improve the postal facilities of the people, and thereby augment the postal revenues; that it would lessen, by a large amount, the necessary expenditure for the postal service, with the certainty that this saving would swell into millions of dollars annually—all of which nobody has denied, and nobody can to-day. All in vain. The House turned a deaf ear to the appeal. The transfer of appropriations asked for was not granted. And when the matter turned up in the Senate, that body, led by the well-known statesman Mr. Gorman of Maryland, not only did not further the reformatory and economizing work of the Postmaster-General, but expressly *curtailed* his power by resolving to prohibit the consolidation of post offices beyond five miles from the corporate limits of any city, and providing that even within those limits no consolidation should affect a post office located at any county seat. This is the law now.

Look at this spectacle. The representatives of the people

in Congress, charged with the duty and entrusted with the power of taking care of the people's convenience and of the people's money, deliberately put aside a proposition submitted to them by a faithful officer of the government to promote the people's convenience and to save the people's money—nay, they tell that officer that he shall not go on promoting the people's convenience, improving the people's service and saving the people's money. Is it too much to say that this means robbing the people of that money which might be saved and is now unnecessarily expended, and of the accumulating millions henceforth to be unnecessarily expended? And why all this? The reason is notorious. This was done because the consolidated post offices would pass under the civil service rules and members of Congress would have fewer postmasterships to distribute among their hangers-on. The plan was arrested, *because* it was good.

This is spoils politics in characteristic efflorescence. But how long will the people tolerate such nefarious sport with their interests? Are they not civilized enough to want the best facilities for the transmission of intelligence offered to them? Are they so reckless as to permit, with eyes open, the squandering of their money at the rate of millions a year merely that their Congressmen may have more post office plunder at their disposal? Is it not time that good citizens should unite to tell the politicians in language vigorous enough to be heeded that this outrageous trifling with the people's service and the people's money must stop? Indeed I trust that the day is not far when the enlightened public opinion of the country will compel what several Postmasters-General have already suggested and what common sense as well as the public interest urgently demand—the complete taking out of politics of the whole postal service, including every position belonging to it. And in your name I express the hope that legislation enabling the Postmaster-General to carry out the admirable consolidation plan to the greatest possible extent, and to bring the smaller post offices which cannot be so consolidated, under effective civil service rules, will be pushed with the utmost energy, and will not cease to be pushed until the post office is what it was intended to be and always should have been: merely an efficient servant of public convenience, and no longer the booty of party warfare and a source of political demoralization.

We have on occasions like this so frequently reiterated our demand for the repeal of the pernicious four year's term law, and supported that demand with elaborate argument that I might abstain from anything more than a passing notice of that subject had not the principle involved in the four year's term law been recently recognized by the enemies of civil service reform in the Chicago Convention as the surest means to destroy the merit system. With the natural instinct of the spirit of mischief they hit upon the poison which, if injected into the body of the public service at large, would most unfailingly kill every reform that has been accomplished in it. The general introduction of "fixed terms of office" which the Chicago platform calls for, and which, as already mentioned, means nothing else than a general change in public places, large and small, in the departments at Washington, as well as in the country, with every change of administration, would result in a quadrennial spoils debauch so monstrous—more and more monstrous as the government machinery grows—it would bring forth a demoralization in the service and among the people so far-reaching and rank, and it would injure the public interest so disastrously, that the imagination fairly recoils from the picture. Happily the defeat of the plotters removed the danger of its realization. But the fact of the fixed term principle having again been proposed as the surest anti-reform poison most forcibly recalls the attention of all friends of good government to the actual existence of a law embodying this very principle of evil—a law which, although fortunately applying only to a comparatively small number of offices, has done more than any other act of legislation to develop the evils of the spoils system and to demoralize the service, and has for this reason been emphatically condemned by almost all the great statesmen of the past, from Jefferson and Madison to Webster and Clay. Having been thus impressively reminded again of the utter viciousness of the principle embodied in that law, may we not hope that a new effort may succeed in bringing about its annulment?

The party which was victorious in the late national election stands upon this platform: "The Civil Service law was placed upon the statute books by the Republican party which has always sustained it, and we renew our repeated declaration that



it shall be thoroughly and honestly enforced and extended wherever practicable." The Republican candidate, Mr. McKinley, in his letter of acceptance spoke thus: "The pledge of the Republican National Convention that our civil service laws shall be sustained and thoroughly and honestly enforced, and extended wherever practicable, is in keeping with the position of the party for the last twenty-four years, and will be faithfully observed. Our opponents decry these reforms. They appear willing to abandon all the advantages gained after so many years of agitation and effort. They encourage a return to methods of party favoritism which both parties have often denounced, which experience has condemned, and which the people have repeatedly disapproved. The Republican party earnestly opposes this reactionary and entirely unjustifiable policy. It will take no backward step upon this question. It will seek to improve, but never degrade the public service."

Nor is this clear and emphatic declaration a mere perfunctory endorsement of the party platform. It expresses Mr. McKinley's own honest sentiments, for, to his honor be it said, he has never failed as a member of Congress to give the civil service law a hearty and effective support. It was he who, in 1890, when some members of his own party sought to overthrow it, indignantly exclaimed on the floor of the House of Representatives: "If the Republican party of this country is pledged to any one thing more than another, it is the maintenance of the civil service law and its efficient execution—not only that, but to its enlargement and its further application to the public service. The merit system is here and it is here to stay." And nobody who knows him doubts that Mr. McKinley meant what he said and that he is honestly determined to act, as President, according to that meaning.

Thus the party in power and the new President have both solemnly promised, not merely to maintain the merit system as now embodied in the civil service law, but to extend it. How are they to extend it? As to the strictly ministerial part of the national service President Cleveland has left them little to do. It is true, the excepted list may still be somewhat reduced by classifying the assistant postmasters, the deputy collectors, and so on. Also the employees of the District of Columbia may, and should, be brought under civil service rules. Likewise would the two Houses of Congress do themselves, and by

way of reducing expenses also to the people, a valuable service by putting their own employees, excepting perhaps the private secretaries, under the merit system; nor would the judicial branch be injured in dignity or in comfort, by having its employees classified too.

But these are comparatively small matters compared with what has been done, and with what is still to be done. Every administration since the enactment of the civil service law, has signalized itself by some conspicuous advance of the merit system. If the incoming administration wishes to follow this rule, its ambition cannot permit itself to be satisfied with merely adding to the competitive schedule a few more hundreds, or thousands of clerks. It will have to aim much higher. It will have at least to accomplish the solution of the postmaster problem, which is the next in order. Indeed, supported by a strong public opinion in favor of thorough administrative reform, it will have the power, and it may consider it its duty, to complete the work of eliminating the spoils virus from the whole of the national service altogether. Only then will it fully equal the precedents set by its predecessors who, one after another, advanced the merit system in constantly increasing progression. And when the national service stands there purged of the spoils blemish, a living proof of the beneficent effects of civil service reform, we may expect its example presently to become irresistible to those of the State and municipal governments that are now lagging behind the onward march.

What I said of the dangers still besetting our cause may have shown you that I underestimate neither the strength nor the cunning of our opponents. But I am nevertheless convinced that their striving will be in vain. They may fight skillfully and stubbornly, but already their cause is morally lost. The question is only, if they fight on, how many dead and wounded they will leave on the field, and how many captives in our lines. Civil service reform has carried position after position, at first against apparently overwhelming odds, and with each advance its force has grown stronger and the resistance weaker. But yesterday we were only a handful, ridiculed and neglected. To-day we count well-nigh the whole intelligence and moral sense of the nation as an earnest ally of our cause. I do not say that the contest is already ended,

but I do say that it is no longer doubtful. There were nearly two years between Gettysburg and Appomattox. But after Gettysburg, Appomattox was sure to come. Thanks to the executive order of the 6th of May, 1896, our cause won its Gettysburg under the leadership of President Cleveland. We have reason to hope that it will win its Appomattox under the leadership of President McKinley. If the opponents of civil service reform, instead of saving time and trouble by a speedy surrender, continue their hostile efforts, it may mean to its friends a longer struggle but none the less a certain victory.

## MEETING OF THE LEAGUE.

HOTEL WALTON, December 11, 1896,  
10.30 A. M.

The President opened the meeting, and called Mr. Henry Hitchcock of St. Louis to the chair.

The Secretary called the roll of delegates.

The first business in order being the election of a President and Vice-Presidents for the ensuing year, the Chairman called for the report of the Committee on Nominations, appointed by the General Committee. Mr. R. Francis Wood of Philadelphia, for the Committee, submitted a report placing in nomination the following:

For President : - Hon. Carl Schurz of New York.

For Vice-Presidents :—Charles Francis Adams of Boston, Henry Hitchcock of St. Louis, Henry Charles Lea of Philadelphia, Augustus R. Macdonough of New York, Franklin MacVeagh of Chicago, J. Hall Pleasants of Baltimore, Rt. Rev. Henry C. Potter of New York, William Potts of New York, and Rt. Rev. P. J. Ryan of Philadelphia.

Mr Bonaparte of Baltimore moved that the Secretary be directed to cast one ballot for the election of the gentlemen named, and the motion was carried unanimously. The Secretary cast the ballot and the nominees were declared duly elected.

Mr. Collins for the Auditing Committee, appointed by the General Committee, submitted the following :

We have examined the accounts of the Treasurer, comparing them with the vouchers, and find them correct ; the amount to the credit of the League being \$171.97, and to the GOOD GOVERNMENT account, \$164.87.

(Signed) CHARLES COLLINS,  
WM. A. AIKEN.

On motion, the report was accepted and ordered filed.\*

The Secretary made a verbal report, outlining the extensions of the Federal classified service during the year, and the extensions that may still be made, substantially as follows:

Since our annual meeting of 1895, President Cleveland has added to the classified service approximately 35,000 positions, the greater propor-

tion of these having been brought in by the Executive order of May 6.

There are now in the Executive civil service 178,717 officers and employees, and of these 87,117 are in the classified service ; 79,212 are subject to competitive examination, 5,063 are employees in the Navy Yards, selected through the registration system, 2,061 are Indians employed in the Indian service, for whom non-competitive examinations are allowed, and 781, only, of whom 592 are Assistant Postmasters, are on the excepted list.

In the unclassified service there are 4,815 officers appointed subject to confirmation by the Senate, 8,854 common laborers below classification, 66,725 fourth class Postmasters, and 11,206 miscellaneous employees, excluded from classification under the rules, the greater number of whom clerks at unclassified post-offices, or persons receiving less than \$300 annually, in other departments.

These figures do not include the members and employees of either the Legislative or Judicial branches of the government, the Diplomatic and Consular Service or the municipal service of the District of Columbia.

The extensions of the merit system in the Federal service still to be effected will be discussed during this session, and it may be of use to have them mentioned briefly at the outset. The principal extensions for which the League will now contend would seem to be as follows :

(1) The further reduction of the excepted list by the transfer of all Assistant Postmasters to the competitive class.

(2) The repeal of the laws limiting to four years the terms of officers appointed subject to confirmation by the Senate.

(3) The reorganization of the Consular Service on a competitive basis, and under permanent rules.

(4) The development of the plan of consolidating fourth class post-offices with larger free-delivery offices, thereby bringing fourth class postmasters and their clerks within the classified service.

(5) The classification of certain branches excluded under the new rules, including particularly the force of the new Congressional Library.

(6) The application of the civil service rules to the Municipal Service of the District of Columbia.

(7) The application of the rules to the employees of the Legislative and Judicial branches of the Government.

With these things accomplished, exceptions to the operation of the rules would be confined to those officers having to do with the political policies of the government, and the establishment of the merit system would be complete.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Hon. John R. Procter, President of the United States Civil Service Commission, addressed the League, reviewing the extensions mentioned in the Secretary's report, and adding much interesting information respecting the practical working of the merit system, in

the departments to which it is now applied, and its effect on the efficiency and economy of administration.

In response to questions, Mr. Procter stated his belief that the employees of the new Congressional Library are properly within the Executive Service and subject to classification. He added that their classification would probably be effected before the new force is organized.\*

The Chairman then announced that reports would be received from representatives of States and localities where local movements for civil service reform are in progress.

Mr. Wilby, of Cincinnati, reported for Ohio as follows :

In responding for Ohio I regret that I cannot report more substantial progress. Among the first local Associations to be organized was that of Cincinnati, but after the passage of the Federal law its members seemed to think that their work had been finished and the Association remained dormant until 1895. In that year, Mr. Roosevelt gave us the benefit of his inspiring presence, and under the influence of an address which he delivered in Cincinnati the Association was revived, and a bill prepared by its executive committee was introduced in the Ohio Legislature. It was drawn on the lines of the Illinois law, applying the merit system to the largest five cities of the State after a vote in its favor by the people of either of those cities. This plan was adopted because it was feared the country members could not be convinced that the economy of the system would offset the expenses of a State Commission. The bill was endorsed by the Chambers of Commerce of Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus and Toledo, and by other non-political associations including the leading labor organization of Cincinnati, the President of which appeared with other representative citizens before the Committee to which the bill had been referred. To the surprise of the spoilsmen the bill passed the Senate, but was subsequently reconsidered and defeated through the efforts of a henchman of our Cincinnati boss who has since been rewarded for this and other misdeeds by an election to Congress. Another bill will be introduced at the next legislative session.

Mr. Cushing, of Cleveland, supplemented Mr. Wilby's report as follows :

There are many signs that the importance of the merit system and the need of its adoption are felt in Ohio to-day more generally than ever before. Our Legislature is not to meet again until 1898, and in the interval the friends of the reform will have an opportunity, which they mean to improve, to agree upon a bill to be presented at that session, and we have many grounds for hope that it will pass.

Rev. W. R. Lord, of St. Paul, read a letter addressed to the League by Senator Ozmun, of Minnesota, reviewing the movement for civil service reform in that State.

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**Senator Ozmun reported, in part, as follows :**

At the last session of the Legislature, held in 1895, I had the honor, as Senator from one of the districts of St. Paul, to introduce a measure designed to place the Civil Service of the State of Minnesota and of the cities thereof, under the merit system. This bill, which was drawn by and with the advice of your Secretary, met with considerable opposition in the Senate, as it was supposed to be a very stringent and comprehensive measure ; but by persistent effort I succeeded in getting it through the Senate in almost the identical form in which it was introduced. In the House it was reported back from the proper committee with the recommendation that it be passed. The prospects for final passage of the bill, for a time seemed to be good, and it undoubtedly would have passed had not the Mayor of a large and neighboring city come down with a powerful lobby and accomplished its defeat. The objection raised to the measure by this lobby and by those who were induced to speak and vote against the measure in the House, were so trivial that they deserved little, if any, consideration. The main objection was that it placed too great a power in the hands of the Governor of the State, and that by appointing improper men as Civil Service Commissioners, the proper working of the law could be easily perverted. Those who would naturally object to a measure of this character, found themselves supported in their opposition by many, who, under other circumstances might have been favorably disposed, and the bill was defeated.

As I am still a member of the Senate, I intend, at the coming session, which opens in January next, to introduce two bills for the placing of the Civil Service of the State, counties and cities under the merit system, adopting so far as practicable the plan carried out in Illinois two years ago. I shall first introduce a bill relating to cities only, and providing for its approval by the people of the respective cities before it can be put in operation. After the passage of this bill, which I think can now be brought about without a great deal of difficulty, I intend to introduce a bill for the application of the system to the civil service of the State and counties, relying upon the sentiment already secured in support of the principles of civil service reform, to pave the way for the passage of such an act also. Although the Mayors of some of the largest cities of this state are, to my personal knowledge, still unfavorably disposed toward civil service reform, I hope, nevertheless, to secure the passage of both bills, though it may be necessary to provide in the first instance that the Commissioners serve without salary.

Following the reading of this letter, Rev. Mr. Lord reviewed briefly the plans of the Civil Service Reform Association of St. Paul with relation to the promotion of Senator Ozmun's proposed bills.

Mr. J. G. Thorp, of Cambridge, reported for Wisconsin as follows :

Although I come from Massachusetts, I represent Wisconsin as the

proxy of Mr. C. N. Gregory, the member of the general committee from that State. I am always pleased to stand for Wisconsin, as it was my old home. I am proud to represent her just now in this body of reformers because of the magnificent showing she made in the recent national election. I am especially proud to represent Mr. Gregory, who is one of the most earnest and intelligent reformers in the North-west.

Mr. Gregory writes me that while the organized efforts for reform the coming winter will be directed toward securing the passage of a Corrupt Practices act for Wisconsin (an excellent draft bill, by the way, has been made by Mr. Gregory himself, who is a recognized authority on this question), an effort will be made to secure the passage of a civil service reform act. A bill for this purpose has already been drawn and will be urged upon the Legislature. It is not expected, however, that it will pass this year; but it will be presented in a way to keep the subject before the public, and to create public opinion in its favor. It will have the support of at least two influential newspapers of the State. The work being done to secure the passage of the Corrupt Practices act has been so thorough that they have strong hope of securing such legislation, which will in itself help toward our special reform.

Mr. R. H. Dana, of Cambridge, reported as follows for Massachusetts:

On December 3d the civil service rules of Massachusetts were, by the approval of Governor Wolcott, extended so as to include messengers in the cities of the Commonwealth, certain superintendents and assistant superintendents, civil engineers, draughtsmen and the like and the aids of the State Fire Marshall, which positions had heretofore been excepted.

The economy of the civil service reform system is well illustrated by the messenger service in the city of Boston. When the reform was introduced in 1884 the number of messengers in the city of Boston was small and the pay such as would hardly invite competition. On the classification of clerks and other employees, there developed an inclination to increase the number of messengers and their salaries. In 1890 the number of such messengers in the city of Boston had already been increased beyond any legitimate demand, but since 1890 the number was still more increased and the annual pay for this additional increase of messengers, to \$27,000. A Boston Alderman frankly admitted that the messenger places were being used for patronage purposes, and that if they were taken away from the Aldermen and put under civil service rules there would be no place left in which to put their political friends. By putting these messengers under civil service rules this whole \$27,000 will doubtless be saved to the city of Boston, while the annual expense of the Civil Service Commission for the whole Commonwealth of Massachusetts and all its cities, and some of its towns, is only \$25,000.

The Secretary read a letter from Mr. Charles Janvier, President of the Citizens' Municipal League of New Orleans,



reviewing the recent reform movement in that city, ending in a victory at the polls for the candidates of the League for municipal and legislative offices, and the subsequent establishment of civil service rules. Mr. Janvier wrote, in part, as follows :

We have secured the enactment by the State Legislature of an Australian Ballot Election Law (the nearest approach to the real article at present in force in this country), and also a new Charter for the city of New Orleans, containing civil service rules modelled upon those now in operation in Chicago. Our law is, however, broader than the Chicago statute, the powers of the Commissioners being much greater. Under our law the Commissioners cannot hold any public office during their incumbency, and are ineligible for any municipal office for five years after they have ceased, either by resignation or expiration of term, to be Commissioners.

It is yet too early to say anything about the Charter, and Civil Service reform, while provided for, is not yet an accomplished fact, owing to the opposition, on the score of expense, manifested by some of the Councilmen. We hope to be able amicably to overcome this opposition, and to have the Civil Service Commission at work by the first of the year. We feel that we have accomplished much, but we fully realize that more remains to be done. It is, of course, of the first importance that the advantage thus gained shall be neither lost nor wasted. We should not only hold steadfast to what we have, but with unfaltering tread move forward to further successes. Genuine reform cannot be reached and established by spasmodic endeavor. It is the fruit of steady, unceasing and progressive effort. The mistake of disbanding when the first spasm is over and thus leaving the field clear to influences for evil which never disband, has heretofore proved fatal to lasting reform, and we do not propose to repeat that mistake.

We propose to maintain a permanent organization and to see that the fences around our municipal prosperity are kept up so that the wild cattle we drove out shall not break in again and "make havoc of our works."

Mr. John C. Rose, of Baltimore, reported for Maryland that the proposed constitutional amendment passed by the Legislature of that State at its last session, had been approved by the Maryland Civil Service Reform Association, and that the Association would make strenuous efforts to secure its ratification when submitted to the people at the fall election of 1897. The Chairman announced that a report for Missouri would be submitted after the luncheon recess.

The Secretary stated that besides the States from which specific reports had been received, he is in correspondence with the promoters of local movements in Pennsylvania, West

Virginia, Iowa, Texas, Colorado, California and Washington.

Mr. Welsh and Mr. Richardson referred briefly to the movement in Pennsylvania. Mr. Siddons, of Washington, suggested that the members of the Pennsylvania Association use their influence with Mr. Brosius, Chairman of the House Committee on Reform in the Civil Service, and a representative from this State, in favor of the bill providing for the application of civil service rules to the official employees of the District of Columbia.

Mr. Bonaparte, for the Committee on Resolutions, presented and read the resolutions prepared, and moved their adoption by the League. Mr. Wyman moved as an amendment that the resolutions be considered seriatim. The amendment was accepted by Mr. Bonaparte and carried.

At the suggestion of Mr. Welsh, discussion of the report was postponed to the afternoon session, and the League then adjourned.

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#### HOTEL WALTON,

December 11, 1896, 2 P. M.

The League reconvened at 2 o'clock P. M. Mr. Hitchcock in the chair. On motion the consideration of the report of the Committee on Resolutions was resumed. The resolutions submitted were taken up seriatim, and after full discussion were adopted unanimously in the following form:

(1) The National Civil Service Reform League assembled in this its sixteenth annual meeting is compelled to notice the fact that during the past year, for the first time since its organization, its principles were openly repudiated, and a revival of discarded abuses threatened, in the platform put forth by a National Convention, and in the public declarations of a candidate for the Presidency. The League cordially endorses the protest published during the contest by its Executive Committee against these mischievous and misleading utterances. It congratulates the country that the purpose thus foreshadowed to undo the good accomplished by persistent effort during a generation's space have failed of consummation, and records its hope that it may be called upon to meet no similar assault in the future.

(2) The League heartily congratulates the country on the truly remarkable progress of the reform under the second administration of President Cleveland, and especially during the past year, a progress which can be best appreciated if we remember that less than 15,000 positions were included in the original classification under President Arthur, and that

in the ten years following, only some 28,000 had been added, while under this administration the whole number therefore included has very nearly been doubled, many thousands being added by the single order of May 6, 1896. So that now, while some 90,000 positions are embraced in the classified service, there is left without the protection thus afforded against the abuses of the spoils system, beside the 70,000 postmasters, only a small fraction of the whole executive Federal Service, consisting of about 1,000 positions subject to confirmation by the Senate, about 8,600 laborers not yet included in the registration system, some 2,000 Indians employed as policeman or in other capacities on the Reservations, about 6,000 positions with very small salaries, mostly under \$300 a year, and 781 offices specially exempted from the rules, being for most part those of Assistant Postmasters. For this great achievement, advancing as it does the fundamental principles of free government, President Cleveland deserves the sincere and heartfelt thanks of all good citizens.

(3) The League recognizes in the President-elect a friend to civil service reform who has rendered eminent service in the past to our cause. His record assures all other friends of the reform that it will be his desire as well as his duty to end what remains of the practice of using Federal offices to reward personal or party service.

To this end, the League, having in mind the instructive experience of past administrations, ventures to hope that he will refuse to recognize individual Congressmen as a part of the appointing power, and that he will adopt as soon as may be practicable, aided, if need be, by the judicious advice of the Civil Service Commission, a plan which may enable him to base his nominations for non-political presidential offices, such as those of Postmasters, and Consuls, upon ascertained fitness and efficiency, regardless of party or other affiliations, and in accordance with the principles of competitive selection. The League hopes that a satisfactory system of classification may be devised and applied to fourth-class and other small post-offices; but until such system is in practical operation the League further suggests to the President-elect that the public interest would be advanced if no removals were made of fourth-class Postmasters except for cause; and it also respectfully submits for his consideration the advisability of extending the system of registration of laborers to all departments of the public service in which laborers are employed.

The League earnestly urges upon him the advisability, and indeed necessity, of adopting these salutary measures at the threshold of the incoming administration, and it pledges him its support, and that of all good citizens in the efforts it confidently expects at his hands toward the betterment of the public service and the cleansing of our National politics.

(4) The League congratulates the State of New York upon the recent classification of its State and departmental service. This important administrative act attests in the clearest and strongest manner the loyalty of Governor Morton to the obligations of the Constitution, and has been hailed with satisfaction by the friends of Civil Service Reform throughout the Union.

(5) The League renews its recommendation that the legislation requisite to place the municipal government and other local offices of the District of Columbia within the operation of the civil service law, be enacted without delay, and it respectfully requests that such executive or legislative action be taken as may be needed to extend the provisions of that law to the employees of the National Library.

(6) At its last annual meeting the League heard with pleasure of the commendable attempt of the Postmaster-General to extend the benefits of the classified service to many postmasters of smaller post-offices, by consolidating their offices with those of the larger cities in the vicinity. This measure held out the promise of a considerable saving of public money and a marked increase in mail facilities, beside applying the merit system to a portion of the public service wherein its introduction is at once most desirable and attended with serious difficulties. The League has since seen with regret and indignation the practical frustration of this judicious measure through the selfish and unscrupulous hostility of certain Senators and Representatives, a hostility cloaked under various frivolous pretexts, but which could be inspired only by a desire to use the public patronage as rewards for personal adherents or party workers, and it urges upon Congressmen that this eminently practical reform be no longer delayed.

(7) It cannot be too clearly and generally understood that the principles of civil service reform in no wise countenance any tenure of office other than during merit and fitness. The League fully recognizes the importance of preserving to responsible superior officers the power of removal of their subordinates, whenever in their judgment this power should be exercised in their public interest, but the League deems it no less important that the officer exercising this power should do it with full and trustworthy information as to the facts, and that reasonable safeguards should be afforded to employees against the loss of their livelihood for personal or political causes. As a means to these ends it commends the requirements of General Order No. 235 of the Postal Department issued by Postmaster-General Bissell, whereby letter carriers are informed of charges made against them and afforded an opportunity for written explanation or defence, before the power of removal is exercised in their cases; and it would see with pleasure the salutary and conservative provisions of this order extended to other branches of the public service, believing that this course would tend to strengthen discipline and increase efficiency besides removing opportunities for injustice and possible abuse of authority.

(8) The League observes with peculiar satisfaction the remarkable increase in the number and activity of the agencies working for better government throughout the country and it calls attention to the significant fact that these agencies, without exception, recognize the principles of Civil Service Reform as fundamental in all well considered movements for improvement in the public service and the purification of our political life.

Mr. R. Francis Wood, of Philadelphia, presented a proposed bill regulating the removal of employees in the classified service, for which the endorsement of the League had been asked by a Committee representing the National Association of Letter Carriers. He moved that the matter be referred to the Executive Committee, with power, and the motion was carried.

Mr. Potts, of New York, then moved that the report of the movement for the adoption of the merit system in the municipal service of St. Louis, postponed from the morning session, be received, and that the Chairman of the meeting, Mr. Hitchcock, be invited to address the League. The motion was carried unanimously. Mr. Hitchcock called Mr. Dorman B. Eaton to the chair, and reported substantially as follows:

The situation in St. Louis, with reference to the introduction of the merit system in the civil service of that city, is a peculiar one. In any other State, that end would probably be sought by procuring the passage by the State legislature of an Act, either amending the city charter, or substituting a new charter; or, as in Illinois, of a general law authorizing such an amendment to the city charter to be submitted to popular vote. Under the present Constitution of Missouri, adopted in 1875, neither of those methods can be pursued. Under a special provision of that constitution, the present charter of St. Louis was framed, in 1876, by a board of thirteen freeholders elected for that purpose by the voters of the city, and was adopted by popular vote. Other provisions directed the legislature to enact general laws providing for the organization and classification of cities and towns, in not more than four classes, all municipalities of the same class to have like powers and be under like restrictions, and authorized any city having a population exceeding 100,000 to frame and adopt by popular vote a charter for its own government, consistent with the constitution and laws of the State. Another provision forbade the legislature to amend any municipal charter by special Act. The legislature having passed such general laws, Kansas City, in 1889, framed and adopted a new charter, substantially similar to that of St. Louis. Before the constitution of 1875 was adopted, the Missouri Legislature, like some others, had a way of passing laws directly amending municipal charters, and since then from time to time enacted laws, general in form, but designed to have that effect. During the past twenty years the validity of such laws has been frequently tested in the courts, with varying results. In 1895, the Supreme Court, in construing a general law which, if valid, abrogated a portion of the Kansas City charter, reviewed all its previous decisions on that subject and held, in substance, that under those constitutional provisions the legislature could not, even by general law, amend a city charter framed and adopted pursuant to the constitutional provisions in question, unless such amendment was made

either (1) in pursuance of some duty imposed upon the legislature by the constitution, for example, that laws shall be passed for the registration of voters in cities, or (2) in reference to some matter which concerned the relation of the city to the State at large, for example, a revenue Act ; but that as to matters of purely municipal concern, such charters could be amended only by vote of the citizens themselves. In other words, that court construed those constitutional provisions as establishing municipal home rule in cities having such charters.

The pending movement for municipal reform in St. Louis grew out of a paper on that subject read in March last before the St. Louis Commercial Club, an influential organization of prominent business men. The club referred that paper to a special committee of five, of which Colonel James C. Broadhead is Chairman, and which, in April, reported in favor of action by the club, looking to an amendment of the city charter, introducing the merit system. They further reported that, under the decision of the Supreme Court above mentioned, this could not be done by the legislature, but only by the adoption by vote of the citizens of an amendment submitted by the Municipal Assembly ; for which purpose an amendment must be framed and recommended to the Municipal Assembly by the Charter Amendment Commission, an advisory body established by ordinance, and consisting of the Mayor, President of the Council, Speaker of the House of Delegates, President of the Board of Public Improvements, City Comptroller and City Counsellor. This report was unanimously approved, and the committee was continued, with full power to urge the adoption of such an amendment. No active steps were taken during the presidential campaign. In October the committee appeared before the Charter Amendment Commission and obtained leave to submit such an amendment, which was submitted to the Commission in December and is now under consideration by them with other important amendments to the charter.

The proposed amendment contains sixteen sections, to be added to the article of the charter concerning the administrative department. Without going into details, I may state that the proposed amendment follows the general plan now in force in the Federal service. It provides for a Civil Service Commission of three members, to be appointed and removable by the Mayor, and to serve for three years, one going out each year. They are to classify the entire civil service, with the usual exceptions, conduct or supervise all examinations of applicants, and, as vacancies arise, certify the three names highest on the list of eligibles for such duties, also providing for promotion on the basis of merit. They are not authorized to remove incumbents, the existing provisions of the charter as to removals being left unchanged, but are required to make annual reports to the Mayor, with suggestions as to the working of the system.

The Charter Amendment Commission received this plan favorably, and we have good reason to believe that they will recommend its substantial adoption by the Municipal Assembly. The Assembly has power by ordinance, to submit any amendment to the charter to popular vote, at a general or special election ; and any amendment so submitted and

receiving three-fifths of the votes cast at such election will thereupon become a part of the charter. All that can be said at present is that the friends of the merit system are hopeful of success.

Mr. Hitchcock then resumed the chair.

Mr. Mason, of New York, moved that the Executive Committee be requested to take into consideration the best methods of enlisting in the cause of civil service reform the labor organizations of the country, and the motion was carried.

Mr. Collins, of New York, moved the adoption of the following:

RESOLVED: That the League expresses its grateful sense of the generous hospitality extended to it by the Pennsylvania Association, the Civic Club, and the Citizens of Philadelphia.

The resolution was seconded by several members and carried unanimously.

The following papers were then read:

"The Relation of Women to the Movement for Civil Service Reform," \* by Mrs. Charles Russell Lowell, of New York.

"Civil Service Reform in the West," † by Hon. John W. Ela, of Chicago.

"Four-Year Tenure," ‡ by Lucius B. Swift, of Indianapolis.

"Civil Service Reform in the Constitution of New York State," by Hon. Sherman S. Rogers, of Buffalo.

A paper by Hon. Dorman B. Eaton, of New York—"Civil Service Commissions Essential to Civil Service Reform" §—was not read owing to the lateness of the hour. Mr. Eaton, however, made a brief extemporaneous address summarizing his subject.

On motion of Mr. Bonaparte it was voted that the Secretary be authorized to incorporate in the printed report of the proceedings of the meeting the annual address of the President, together with the papers read by Mrs. Lowell and Mr. Eaton, and such others as the Executive Committee shall deem it practicable and advisable to publish.

On motion of Mr. Storey it was voted that the President's address be printed also as a separate pamphlet and circulated as widely as possible.

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\* Page 66. † Page 73. ‡ Page 84. § Page 89.

The Chairman expressed his appreciation in a brief response and, on motion of Mr. Low, of Brooklyn, the League adjourned.

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The delegates were entertained at luncheon at the Hotel Walton on the 10th and 11th, by the Pennsylvania Association, assisted by a Committee of members of the Philadelphia Civic Club.



## REPORT OF THE TREASURER.

### GENERAL FUND.

*Balance on hand, Dec. 10, 1895,* . . . . . **\$350.27**

RECEIPTS.—From subscriptions.....	\$2,145.00	
" contribution of Newton Assn....	60.00	
" sale of pamphlets.....	11.40	
" interest on deposits.....	15.84	<b>\$2,232.24</b>
		<b>2,582.51</b>

EXPENDITURES :

Account of Secretary's salary.....	\$950.00	
Clerk hire.....	660.00	
Printing... ..	306.25	
Postage .....	114.75	
Paid to F. E. Leupp, account of ex- penses of " Good Government," for six months ending December, 1895.....	200.00	
Traveling expenses.....	87.70	
Congressional Record.....	8.00	
Expenses of Finance Committee...	27.70	
Office expenses, stationery and sup- plies.....	55.14	<b>\$2,409.54</b>

Balance on deposit at Continental Trust Co..... **\$172.97**

### GOOD GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE FUND.

*Balance on hand, Dec. 10, 1895,* . . . . . **\$7.28**

RECEIPTS.—From Maryland Association.....	\$197.25	
" Buffalo .....	45.00	
" Massachusetts subscribers.....	5.20	<b>247.45</b>
		<b>\$254.73</b>

EXPENDITURES :

Paid to F. E. Leupp, Manager, ac- count of year ending July 1, 1895	\$254.73	<b>\$254.73</b>
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E. & O. E.

WM. JAY SCHIEFFELIN,  
*Treasurer.*

## The New System in New York.

BY SILAS W. BURT.

THE State of New York has, probably with some reason, borne the odium of nourishing if not of engendering the spoils system in the early history of our nation. It was a senator from New York, who later, in debate, uttered the oft-quoted phrase, "To the victors belong the spoils." It must be accepted as some counterpoise to this bad distinction that in the same State was organized the first great movement against the spoils system and that on its statute-books was inscribed the first civil service law applicable to State and municipal governments.

This law, as was also the present United States law, was drawn by a committee of the New York Civil Service Reform Association, and both were largely the work of Mr. Eaton, to whom the cause of reform owes so much. The United States law was enacted on January 16th, 1883, and the New York law on May 4th of the same year and both were wrested from reluctant legislators by that audacity which has proved to be the most potent instrumentality in the arsenal of reform.

The New York law was approved both officially and personally by Governor Cleveland who, on the day he signed it, named an admirable Commission to administer it, consisting of two well-known friends of the reform, Andrew D. White and Henry A. Richmond, and Augustus Schoonmaker, who though not then known prominently as a reformer proved to be a most cordial and useful one. Mr. White, having declined the appointment, John Jay, an eminent member of the New York Association, was appointed in his place.

Everything was thus auspicious for the successful inauguration of the new system, so far as the machinery was concerned, but there were three impediments to be considered: the hostility of a large number of the appointing officers; ignorance as to how far popular sentiment sustained the law and a consequent fear that there might be a repeal or serious impairment of the statute by the next Legislature. It is now evident that this fear was unfounded since in the later years when the law was, so far as its enforcement was concerned, a mere dead letter, no one dared to press its repeal.

While these deterrent considerations were not controlling, they suggested the tentative character of the law and such an administration of it as would clearly though gradually demonstrate the benefits of the merit system and insure its popular appreciation and support.

The administration of the State law could not be modelled upon that of the United States law, though almost identical in expression, because of the radical difference in the framework of the two services. In the National Government the President is the executive head of the whole service which almost wholly falls within the domain of the eight great departments, administered by the official chiefs who comprise the Cabinet. This comprehensive organization and the classification of the clerical force under the act of 1853 enabled a systematic application of the rules from the outset in the field first occupied.

In the State government the Governor holds no such supreme position as the President—he does not appoint the heads of the great departments, who on the contrary are elected in the same manner and by the same constituency as himself, and so are independent in their respective spheres. And again—only a very small part of the service is comprehended within these departments—the far greater part is scattered through the State in the prisons, reformatories, asylums, hospitals, public works and buildings, normal schools, agricultural stations and many other branches, all of which are distinct, and even in these there is a general lack of union and system.

Another marked difference obtains in the classification of the subordinate force in the National service, and the fixed salaries of positions in the several classes and the allotment in the appropriations of definite numbers of clerks of each class or, when outside the classes, definite numbers and salaries of the persons to be employed. In the State service the head of each department or office is given a “lump” appropriation and subject to its limits employs such number of persons and at such salaries as he in his discretion may determine. This lax method not only breeds extravagance, but its lack of system prevents proper organization, leads to harmful and unjust discrepancies in the compensation of persons in different offices performing like duties and impedes the free operation of the civil service rules.

In this chaotic domain, the first Commission addressed itself to the application of the law so far as practicable and sustained by the sympathetic support of Governor Cleveland, had made some progress when the latter was elevated to the Presidency and was succeeded by David B. Hill. It is not purposed to give an account of the mal-administration of the law by Governor Hill, who in December, 1886, removed Commissioners Jay and Richmond, Judge Schoonmaker having previously resigned. For eight years or so the active friends of the merit system saw with mingled grief and shame the practical suspension of the law. In 1894 they secured a special committee of the Senate for an investigation that laid bare the many violations and evasions of the law, known and suspected, during those dreary years.

But this year of 1894 is conspicuous for two other most important achievements. First, the passage of an amendment to the law making it unlawful for the State Comptroller to draw his warrant for the payment of any officer or person in the classified service who has not been certified by the Civil Service Commission, as appointed or employed in pursuance of the law and the rules, and giving any qualified tax payer the right to maintain an action in the Supreme Court for the recovery from the Comptroller of any such unlawful payment and the return of the money to the State treasury. A similar provision applies to the like unlawful payment for services of uncertified persons by the fiscal officers of cities. This has proved to be a most efficient means of enforcing an obedience to the rules and it should be comprised in all laws establishing the merit system.

The second achievement in 1894 was the incorporation in the new State Constitution, then being framed, of a mandate in these words: "Appointments and promotions in the civil service of the State, and of all the civil divisions thereof, including cities and villages, shall be made according to merit and fitness, to be ascertained, so far as practicable, by examinations, which, so far as practicable, shall be competitive," and which Constitution by a majority of 83,000 votes became operative on January 1st, 1895. The history of this great attainment and of its broad results will be presented to you by a distinguished member of the League to whose advocacy and efforts we are largely indebted for this unique triumph.

I would add that since the Constitution went into force nearly two years ago the civil service section has been construed on several points by the higher courts and the decisions have invariably sustained a strict adherence to it both in letter and spirit. The expression of this purpose in the opinion by the Court of Appeals in the McClelland case is most noteworthy. The Court says: "It is apparent that a new principle, far reaching in its scope and effect, has been firmly imbedded in the Constitution. Like many other reforms, this work has not been accomplished without a long and persistent struggle. The friends and opponents of the measure have debated its merits and the difficulties in the way of its practical and harmonious operation, before the public for years. The considerations which entered largely into this debate are no longer pertinent, since the principle has become an accomplished fact and placed by the people beyond the possibility of any substantial change in a contrary direction. This court, upon more than one occasion, has, with entire unanimity, expressed its approval of the principle, and exercised all its powers in every proper case in aid of the laws intended to carry out the idea which was always at the foundation of the question. Whatever doubt or distrust may exist with respect to the possibility of obtaining for the law an honest and fair execution, there is none and can be none, at least among thinking men, with respect to its ultimate beneficial effects upon the service. That it must, if fairly and honestly administered, go far to suppress very grave evils and abuses that have become peculiarly rife and active in our political system, few intelligent people who have given the subject much attention can doubt. In so far as its administration may depend upon the action of the judicial department it is entitled to, and doubtless will, receive a fair and liberal construction, not only according to its letter, but its true spirit and the general purpose of its enactment."

The civil service provision in the Constitution directed that "Laws shall be made to provide for the enforcement of this section." Two sessions of the Legislature have occurred since the Constitution became operative and no such laws have been passed, but on the contrary bills prepared by the Associations of the State have at each session been defeated.

This failure has been repaired so far as the State service is concerned by the act of Governor Morton in directing the

State Commission to revise the rules and classification so as to make them accord with the provisions of the Constitution and their construction by the Courts. The rules so revised were promulgated by the Governor on the 8th instant and this closing act in his administration deserves and will receive the hearty applause of all those interested in good government.

It was intended that these rules should include every valuable means to secure the perfect working of the merit system so far as devised through experience gained in every field. In the new rules prepared by the United States Commission and promulgated by the President on May 6th last, whatever was deemed applicable to the State service has been borrowed and the same liberty has been taken with regard to the rules and practice elsewhere adopted. Of course the controlling motive has been to put in practical execution, so far as possible under existing laws, the mandate of the new Constitution.

Our League has concerned itself rather in the promotion, establishment and enforcement of fundamental principles than in the details of their administration, but these latter points have aroused greater interest since the merit system has been extended to so many fields. At the risk of repeating what to some here present may be trite, I will briefly give the general outline of the new rules just promulgated by Governor Morton and mention their novel features.

The rules begin with a definition of the civil service of the State as comprehending all offices and positions of trust or employment the incumbents of which receive compensation for services or expenses from the treasury of the State or that of any civil division thereof or official fees, except military and naval officers. This broad and sweeping interpretation is intended to indicate that merit and fitness as enjoined by the Constitution shall govern all appointments whether made under the rules or not.

As usual this integral service is divided into the unclassified and classified, the former comprising all positions filled by the Governor and Senate, or by joint ballot by the Legislature or by name in any statute, or appointed by the Governor alone, and all the officers, employés and attachés of the Legislature. All the residue constitutes the classified service subject to the rules and distributed to four classes.

The first class comprehends the positions exempt from examination, being the lawful deputies of chief officers, the secretaries of State boards and commissions, one chief cashier in offices where the receipt and disbursement of public funds is a function and confidential positions—every position in the class being named. The great number of distinct and independent offices, commissions and boards makes this class number about 265, of which, however, 115 are attachés of the courts including the confidential stenographers, etc., of the 76 judges of the higher courts. The inclusion of quite a number of places hitherto ignored has increased the number of these exemptions but not excessively as compared with previous classifications. It is probable that the present aggregate will be reduced from time to time by transfers to the next class.

The second class includes all positions to be filled by competitive examinations, being the great bulk of the service, and is the residual class as embracing every position not specially comprised by name in the other classes. It is divided into fourteen groups, based upon the respective duties and functions of the several positions, as follows:

A.—Clerks.	H. —Medical Positions.
B.—Cashiers.	I. —Mathematicians.
C.—Custodians and Messengers.	J. —Scientists.
D.—Engineers.	K. —Agriculturists.
E.—Inspectors.	L. —Instructors.
F.—Special Agents.	M.—Mechanics and Craftsmen.
G.—Law Positions.	N.—Miscellaneous Positions.

And these in turn are subdivided in accordance with the importance and special character of the duties—for instance Group D.

Engineers:—

Subdivision 1.—Civil Engineers.

2.—Levelers, surveyors, rodmen.

3.—Chainmen.

4.—Architects.

5.—Draftsmen.

6 and 7.—Electrical engineers—dynamo tenders.

8 and 9.—Steam and mechanical engineers.

Again, for the purpose of orderly arrangement and of regu-

lated promotion, the positions in the subdivisions are graded upon the basis of their rates of annual compensation. There are ten of these.

All this, as presented here, may seem to be a complicated disposition, but the plan has been suggested by long experience and will very greatly abridge the work of examination. The distribution of places among the groups without regard to their titles, compensation or office, but solely in accordance with their respective duties is also devised to prevent evasions by novel appellations, or otherwise, designed to throw them out of the classification.

The rules repeat the formula that all examinations shall be of a suitable and practical character. That body of our citizens who have, for obvious reasons, always looked askance at the merit system, have been from the first supersensitive regarding the character of the examinations. In New York they have been recently reiterating the old complaint that the tests are too scholastic and that they should be practical and pertinent to the duties of the positions. As the expression on this point by both the enemies and friends of reform is identical it follows that the difference of ideas lies in a corresponding variance in the significance of words.

We, who adhere to the merit system, use the adjectives "practicable," "suitable" and "pertinent" when qualifying the noun "examinations" as having reference to the whole service to be rendered as a result of such examinations. While the greater weight should rest on the questions testing fitness for the immediate duties to be performed, they should also test probable ability to meet the additional duties in such emergencies as occur in all public offices, and what is more important should test the candidate's docility and aptitude for promotion, since it is from such of these candidates as are selected for admission to the service that the greater number of the higher places are to be replenished.

It is also to be remembered that we have always insisted that our system is the *merit* system and the New York Constitution links "merit" with "fitness" as the two sole and indispensable qualifications for the service of the State and that of all its civil divisions. That State, like its sisters in the Union, provides free education for all and spends annually millions of dollars to that end. This free education is not a



bounty to the individual but in a higher sense that of the German universal military service is a civic obligation and so has been made compulsory. The State insists that all, unless otherwise educated, shall avail themselves of its gratuitous means of preparation for the duties of citizenship—and among these duties is the service of the State when selected for that purpose. Those who have utilized these means merit the recognition of the State when in need of good service and the relative degrees of their merit are to be ascertained by competitive examination. In fact the merit system is the natural and logical sequence of our free school system and the latest statistics show that 89 per cent. of those competitively examined have been educated in the free schools and in the academies receiving State aid, and the same ratio holds in the appointments.

It follows that our examinations may properly, and indeed should, test the candidates general intelligence and acquirements by a few simple questions—not to define the boundaries of Zanzibar or the diameter of the moon, or to answer any of the other absurd and fictitious queries our opponents are ever fabricating and quoting as facts; but it is certainly no hardship for a citizen of New York to be asked to solve a few problems in fundamental arithmetic or to name the more important of the geographical features of his own State. These questions in elementary education are abhorrent to our critics who, when not inventing preposterous falsehoods about them, are harping on the word “practical.”

In New York City an ardent reformer has recently arisen in the person of Mr. Abraham Gruber, who calls his scheme “progressive civil service” though so far as revealed it indicates retrogression to the times and methods when the main questions asked the candidate for public appointment were “To what organization do you belong?” “How did you vote at the last primary?” “Who are your backers?” and all the other searching and intensely practical queries of the spoils catechism.

There is of course the liability that untrained and zealous examiners may ask questions too scholastic and recondite, but such cases are infrequent and their harmful influence greatly exaggerated, but as affording pretexts for criticism they should be prevented by a more careful supervision.

In some of the State departments there are positions where

the service is not continuous through the entire year, but regularly recurs in each successive year—for instance the great majority of the places in the Department of Public Works require actual service only during the period of canal navigation. These places are filled by competition as the others in this class and the incumbents are entitled to re-employment at the beginning of each recurring annual season as if their service had been uninterrupted.

Whenever the Commission deems it advantageous to the public interest the territory of the State may be divided into distinct districts for examination and appointment. For general purposes the examinations are held at ten or fifteen different points several times in each year.

In this class the appointing officer may select from the three persons certified as standing highest upon the proper eligible list, thus retaining the principle that such officers must exercise a limited discretion in order to conserve their authority and consequent responsibility.

The period of probationary service is three months, and liberal but guarded provision is made for temporary employment, transfers and reinstatements.

What are believed to be adequate provisions have been made to prevent the evasions and abuses that have hitherto weakened the operation of the merit system in New York, though past experience warns us not to underrate the ingenuity and activity of the spoils-mongers, which grow sharper as they see that the whole service is being gradually but surely wrested from their grasp.

The Constitution couples promotions with appointments in its injunction that merit and fitness as ascertained by examination shall govern them. In framing the new rules it has not been considered that such examinations for promotion should be necessarily the formal written ones applicable to appointments. The reasons for reform as regards the original admission to the service are not so cogent when applied to promotion. As in this respect these rules differ from those adopted elsewhere, this divergence demands some explanation.

So far as competition is concerned, that of daily actual service is incomparably superior to any short inquiry—which, in the nature of things, must be incomplete. This common service, side by side, for a long period is a genuine, thorough and

practical competition that even Mr. Gruber could not carp at. Some qualities of such service can be comparatively recorded such as attendance, accuracy and general conduct. But the main qualifications on which promotion may properly depend are not stable and may differ widely in different offices and under different conditions—thus it might be expert ability, scientific or otherwise—or knowledge of precedents—or power of systematic record,—or that of clear and comprehensive expression—or administrative and executive ability—or tact in treating the external official relations, or critical or detective ability, or a score of other diverse qualities, even including technical skill and manual dexterity, few of which could be adequately tested by a written examination or even comparatively recorded. All these qualities, however, that may not be demonstrated in a formal inquisition of a few hours are exhibited under the daily observation of the superior officers. It also often happens that some signal display of ability in a difficult and complicated matter or in an important crisis may indicate promotion as the proper and perhaps the only possible reward.

I think, however, that the controlling argument is that in the ardor for reform, we must not seriously weaken that administrative authority and responsibility that form the essential framework of the public service and without which it would collapse. The tendency in this direction seems to me to be the most dangerous menace to our work in establishing permanently the merit system. Any impairment of official responsibility invites insubordination and consequent inefficiency. These promotion examinations are almost invariably made by fellow-subordinates which in itself is a demoralizing influence so far as discipline and respect for the head of the office is concerned.

The new rules give the appointing officer discretionary power to promote for ascertained merit and fitness, giving due weight to seniority, but he must certify to the Commission his reasons for the promotion and these shall be of public record in his office open to the scrutiny of any one concerned. Publicity is the most valuable, conservative and beneficial agency in securing the proper administration of public affairs and I believe this will be demonstrated in this new scheme for promotion.

The principal objection urged against this discretionary method is that it permits the practical operation of undue favor or prejudice ; but certainly this liability is greatly reduced through the requirement of public reasons by the officer. It, however, suggests another menace to the stability of the merit system and that is the growing disposition of its beneficiaries to think they must be protected against the contingencies in private life where employees must run the risk of prejudice and neglect. The civil service must not be coddled nor led to believe that this League and its friends will strive to make them that privileged class the opponents of reform talk so much about. There has been a strong inclination by some portions of the service to organize for the purpose of securing legislation to abridge hours of labor, increase pay and obtain a tenure in most cases incompatible with good government. The League should strongly oppose this tendency towards such questionable class-organizations.

To resume the classification—Class III embraces all mechanics and skilled laborers receiving an annual compensation of less than \$720, and other minor positions the greater part of which are in the many isolated asylums, hospitals, reformatories and other corrective and charitable institutions. These places are, as hitherto, filled by non-competitive examination, but whenever it is deemed practicable to fill any of them by competition the Commission is bound to transfer them to Class II.

Class IV includes all unskilled laborers who are to be employed at discretion. Under favorable conditions a system of registration based upon the approved Boston plan would have been established for this class, but almost without exception the only unskilled laborers are those casually employed upon the canals. All construction work on these water-ways is done by contract and it is only when breaches in the banks require repair that such laborers are needed, and these unforeseen casualties may occur at any point on several hundred miles of the canals. It is obvious that no scheme of registration could be applied in such a field.

As the Constitution, while providing for regulated appointments and promotions, does not mention removals, the rules do not restrict the power to remove. The only such restriction that seems consistent with the views expressed here re-

garding promotions would be the extension to removals of the filing of reasons therefor as a public record. Many cogent arguments plead against other restraints proposed.

The rules do not apply to the service of the civil divisions of the State since existing laws provide for distinct action by the mayors of cities and they do not confer upon the Governor authority to regulate the service of counties, towns and villages. It is probable that future legislation will confer such authority as to counties and also that the respective cities will continue to have control of their municipal service. The Massachusetts system under which the State Commission exercises supervision over the regulation of the service in the cities has many advantages and is adaptable to the conditions existing in many of the States. But New York contains many very large cities whose internal affairs have been so frequently and intolerably interfered with by the Legislature that the principle of home-rule is accepted as the only safeguard against such misrule and any apparent infringement of the principle is strenuously resisted.

The New York law, however, does require that all regulations prescribed by the mayors of cities shall be subject to the approval or veto of the State Commission which also has full power of investigation. While these powers should be extended so as to ensure a uniform and close adherence to the mandate of the Constitution, it is probable that the general and immediate control will remain with the cities.

Such are the present conditions in New York, though how long these will retain their pleasing aspect seems doubtful. There is much agitation among the "progressive" reformers whose leader has been mentioned and there are rumors of legislation of a more *practical* character at the coming session. Great confidence is felt, however, that public opinion will prevent any impairment of the principle enunciated by the Constitution that merit and fitness ascertained by open competitive examination shall be the general rule for appointments and promotions.

## The Post Offices as Party Spoils.

BY RICHARD HENRY DANA.

ONE year ago I had the honor of delivering an address before this League on the appointment and tenure of postmasters. In that address it was pointed out how, under our spoils system, we had spoiled our greatest government business, how the one department which should most administer to our business convenience and social intercourse was in very many respects less efficient than in other great civilized countries and all because we had allowed it to be looted for party purposes ; and how we had done this not for our own advantage or our better government, but to aid one party against another, and more often to allow one faction or individual within a party to keep some other faction or individual of his own party out of power, and usually with the purpose and effect of thwarting the public will and depriving us of self-government. In short, Uncle Sam has allowed the boys to play base ball all the season over his vegetable garden and then wondered that his vegetables have not thriven as well as his neighbor's.

It was pointed out how several important improvements which had been adopted in other countries twenty or thirty years ago had not yet been introduced into the United States, or only in a partial degree, and how our post office department was wholly without efficient organization, having no divisions or division superintendents, but was like an immense army with no majors, no colonels, no brigadier generals, with no officers between the captains and the general in chief. It was shown that this want of organization had been officially recognized in the reports of every postmaster general for the past ten years or so.

Since this address was delivered, one critic complains of one or two instances of apparent slowness in some European post office, but no one fully acquainted with the system in this and other countries has denied our lack of efficiency. One person questions whether some civilized country, say Spain, may not have as bad a postal organization as we, but no one well informed on the question has doubted that we are behind

the greater civilized nations in our postal development and even Spain, as is shown by its last admirable post office report, does not give much comfort to those who would like to find some civilized country worse off than ourselves in this respect. Several writers have argued that the newness of our country is the sufficient cause for our postal deficiencies, but post offices are not ancient affairs. There was no government post office in England before the landing of the Pilgrims. The modern system grew up under the inspiration of Sir Rowland Hill. He was born nineteen years after the declaration of our national independence and he first secured cheap postage in England only in 1840. Our railroads and express companies and telegraph and telephone companies are all new, newer than the postal department, and yet in comparison they are admirably organized.

I have seen it given as an excuse that our country is large, and in many places our population sparse. That is a curious excuse for want of organization. As a rule the larger the business and the larger the country over which it extends the greater is the need of thorough organization and not the less. On a one mile branch railroad with but one engine and train of cars the President of the road may light the fires and collect the fares, but the efficiency and financial success of the Pennsylvania, the New York Central and the C. B. & Q., require most thorough organization. As to the finances, many of the improvements in which we are deficient in our thickly settled districts are such as have been proved, where adopted, to be sources of additional net income, while it has been clearly demonstrated that it is the abuse of our franking privilege and the want of proper laws and rules regulating second class mail matter, that causes our annual deficiency in the postal revenues.

In setting forth our postal shortcomings and stating the true relation of our post office department with those of other countries I have been accused of being unpatriotic and of unduly admiring what is foreign. Now while I trust I am free from Anglo-mania or Europeo-mania I also hope and pray to be delivered from the inability to see anything good beyond the Eastern shores of the United States. Soberly and seriously, is it not the part of a patriot who finds anything superior in another country to urge its adoption in his own, and if he is

aware of glaring defects in any of his institutions to try and find the remedy and call attention in no unmistakable terms to both the ill and the cure, that in the end everything in his country may be of the best.

It is plain we cannot let a complicated piece of machinery made for one purpose be used also for wholly different and inconsistent purposes and get good results. We cannot expect the immense postal department with its one hundred to two hundred thousand employees be made a dumping ground of political henchmen and to have its officials changed from top to bottom just as they are beginning to learn the rudiments of this very complicated business and at the same time get the good results of business-like appointments and tenure of office. You cannot expect your children can play go-cart in the mud with your gold chronometer watch and have it keep perfect time.

There is, however, a marked unwillingness to face the plain facts and admit the deficiencies and the want of organization and business methods in our postal system. In short, both good natured Uncle Sam and the boys who have been playing all the spring deny that the vegetables are any less flourishing than in other gardens, notwithstanding their capers, but add, with beautiful consistency, that the reason for the deficiencies, which they say don't exist, are the atmosphere, or the distance of the sun. No, Oh dear me, no! It is not the dragging the watch in the mud that made it stop.

But for all this we are by no means in a hopeless condition. As was pointed out last year, the very fact that we have as good service as we have under such demoralization of all business methods is conclusive proof of the natural adaptability to circumstances and the business instincts of the average individuals who from time to time have had a short try at some part of the job. An eminent postal authority from Germany expressed himself as very much struck with the alertness and diligence of the employees in one of our larger post offices then under civil service rules and headed by a postmaster believing in the reform.

Experience in the railway mail service continues to illustrate what can be done for the benefit of the postal service by abolishing the spoils system and introducing civil service reform methods. As I showed last year, the best record ever



reached in the railway mail service under the spoils system was at the end of President Arthur's administration, when for a longer time than usual very few partisan changes had been made. The employees though then appointed as party spoils were each submitted to a thorough "case" test, a sort of half examination pending probationary employment. The record showed the number of correct distributions to one error had reached the high number of 5575. On the incoming of the first Cleveland administration there were many changes for political reasons and the record fell to 3364. After the looting of this part of the service in the first few months of the Harrison Administration with absolutely unprecedented rapidity of removals, the record fell to 2834 and, after that, under six years of civil service reform, had risen to the remarkable record of 8894 a year ago last June. During the last year the improvement has continued and as more and more of the present employees have been brought in under civil service reform examinations and are continued in the department during good service, the record of correct distributions has come up to the still more remarkable figure of nearly ten thousand to one error. It is said to be the best service of its kind in the world. In the general postal service, too, the adoption of civil service principles in so many of the post offices has had the effect of diminishing the number of letters sent to the dead letter office, notwithstanding an actual increase of mail matter during the same time.

Possibly, if our shortcomings arose from incurable national deficiencies, our duty might lie in concealment, but when we know that the cause is curable and that while it lasts it is also demoralizing and corrupting to our politics, our duty is plainly disclosure.

At our meeting a year ago we were greatly encouraged by the new plan of consolidating the fourth-class post offices with larger central ones, by the order bringing the smaller offices thus annexed, with their former postmasters, into the classified civil service, and also by the promise of very considerable extensions of the civil service law soon to be made. These extensions have since been carried out, so that the post office department at Washington is practically on a basis of merit appointment and tenure of office. We shall, therefore, soon have a trained body of officials at the centre of the de-

partment with a better understanding of the needs of the service and consequently a gradual improvement. In fact as far as the postal department at Washington goes, and also the post offices where the reform is applied, the reform has been carried about as far as it can be, with the exception of the postmasters themselves and perhaps some 570 assistant postmasters who are excepted.

The plan of consolidating smaller post offices was, however, effectually blocked in the United States Senate last spring by amendments to the Post office appropriation bill so that no post office can be consolidated if it is over five miles from the boundary of the city or town having the principal office, and not even then if the town of the subordinate office happens to be either a county seat (with the exception of Cambridge, Massachusetts and Towson, Maryland) or is of less than 1500 inhabitants. Even the small amount of consolidation that might still have taken place under these amendments was prevented by the refusal of Congress to allow salaries to be paid postmasters after they had become heads of branches, although it has been proved that such consolidation actually saves money. That this consolidation and reform of post offices, much needed also for the better organization of the department into districts, should have been blocked mainly by the efforts of Senator Gorman, of Maryland, the spoilsman who has notoriously put incompetents and criminals into the government employ, was most fitting. It is still possible to remove these obstacles to consolidation with the next post office appropriation bill, but it would then be too late to do much in this way of reform before the incoming of the next administration, so that Mr. McKinley will have to meet the full pressure for these numerous offices without the aid of any established system of appointment on merit.

What would be the consequence of the change of administration on the service already classified, it is impossible to doubt. Mr. McKinley's attitude is, too, well known. His able defence of civil service reform in Congress in 1890, the platform on which he was elected and his explicit letter of acceptance make it clear that he will uphold the system already established and will make any required extensions along the usual lines. To think differently would be putting Mr. McKinley among the most insincere of the "catch-vote" poli-

ticians. But how about the postmasters? As I have said, they are not classified under the civil service rules and they can only be brought under its principles by the adoption of some new and unusual method. There are now 70,238 postmasters, according to the report for June 30, 1896. Of these, 3,635 are presidential and 66,303 are fourth-class. They man the military outposts, they are the pretorian guards of the boss system in every city, town and village of the United States. They are the chief resources in the Federal service now left for the mere wire-pulling politicians. Their salaries, with those of the consuls and a few other officials, form the only remaining national bribery fund for private use, at public expense, for controlling primaries, caucuses and conventions. Theirs are the only large number of positions which congressmen and defeated candidates for Congress of the dominant party can continue to sell for cash payments, by way of commissions on the salaries secured. Consequently the crowding for these places promises to be very great. The scramble has already begun. According to press interviews, many a Congressman is planning how to divide this patronage carcass within his district. Shall we be subjected to another disgraceful scene with this incoming administration or has the time and the man come to put an end to it all? Mr. McKinley has certainly shown enough interest in and comprehension of the reform to wish to put a stop to this remainder of the vicious system. He has been enough in Washington to see the danger of yielding a little. He must be aware that if he should yield one office to one congressman, he would have to yield another to another, and so on, yielding one after another, he would fall with increasing rapidity into the old spoils method. The times, however, have come to Mr. McKinley's aid. Every other election has been distinctly a party victory. It has been hard for the President to resist party claims, but this time it was not a party victory but a national one. Under the condition of this year's vote the sound money democrats alone insured Mr. McKinley's election, and if I do not misunderstand the sound money democrats, they are not asking for a division of the patronage. Then why is this not the time and why is not Mr. McKinley the man to take the firm stand and to say "No" to every partisan demand for a postmastership? If he should do this, Mr. McKinley will be

added to the list of those Presidents who have done so much to advance the cause of civil service reform. Nay, more, he will go down to history as the one President who has completed the reform and the only one who has in no respect yielded to the spoils system since the days of Washington and Adams, and who has at last put American politics on a higher level, where purity and honor will have a fair chance to win. Is this too much to hope? I trust not. Before our next annual meeting, one way or the other, it will be writ in History.

# The Relation of Women to the Reform of the Civil Service.

BY MRS. CHARLES RUSSELL LOWELL.

It was natural that the first Association for the Reform of the Civil Service should have been formed in New York, because New York has the unhappy distinction of having originated the "spoils system." In 1832 Van Buren's nomination as Minister to England was opposed by Webster, Calhoun and Clay because of his attempts to persuade the President to adopt the "New York System" of party removals.

"It is a detestable system," cried Henry Clay "drawn from the worst period of the Roman republic, and if it were to be perpetuated—if the offices, honors and dignities of the people were to be put up to a scramble and to be decided by the results of every Presidential election—our government and institutions, becoming intolerable, would finally end in a despotism as inexorable as that of Constantinople."

But Van Buren prevailed, President Jackson adopted the "New York system" and Federal politics quickly became poisoned, while in New York the corruption of United States office-holders was added to the already existing corruption of the Civil Service of the State, and "machines" of both parties exercised a power which was irresistible, because there was no attempt to resist it.

The "inexorable despotism" prophesied by Henry Clay was a fact, and there was no organized plan of revolt until 1877, when the first Civil Service Reform Association was formed in New York, at the suggestion of Mr. Dorman B. Eaton, and a constitution adopted of which the second article reads as follows:

"The object of the Association shall be to establish a system of appointment, promotion and removal in the Civil Service, founded upon the principle that public office is a public trust, admission to which should depend upon proven fitness. To this end the Association will demand that appointments to

subordinate executive offices, with such exceptions as may be expedient, not inconsistent with the principle already mentioned, shall be made from persons whose fitness has been ascertained by competitive examinations open to all applicants properly qualified, and that removals shall be made for legitimate cause only, such as dishonesty, negligence or inefficiency, but not for political opinion or refusal to render party service; and the Association will advocate all other appropriate measures for securing integrity, intelligence, efficiency, good order and due discipline in the Civil Service."

The Woman's Auxiliary to the Civil Service Reform Association of New York was formed only a year ago, and it is not to the credit of women that it should have taken them so long to realize that they had a duty in this matter, and that, so far, the example of the New York women should not have been followed in any other State.

The New York Auxiliary was the result of two suggestions, both coming from persons from outside the State—Mr. Herbert Welsh, of Philadelphia, and Miss Cleveland, of Washington; and the hope of both was, I believe, that an Auxiliary to the National League should be formed at once. It was thought best, however, to begin with the local organization and to trust to the natural development of the federation as soon as there should be local organizations enough to form it.

The Woman's Auxiliary has, strangely enough, been obliged to explain the reasons for its existence—one good Civil Service Reformer even going so far as to object to its formation as unnecessary, because the cause of reform was already won. That objection, unfortunately, we know not to be valid—however great may be the cause for gratitude for many victories, the war is by no means over yet, and the spoilsmen, driven to bay, are (in New York at least) preparing for a determined attack on the very life of the reform. I will not, therefore, stop to answer an objection to which the continued existence of the National League itself is an all-sufficient answer, but will proceed to the other objection which has been made to the Woman's Auxiliary, which is that there should not be a separate *Woman's* Association, but that women should join the Civil Service Reform Association and work with the men.

This seems to the Executive Committee of the New York

Women's Auxiliary to be a mistake simply because they believe, and they think they have already proved by their year's experience, that by having two Associations more interest can be aroused than by having only one. There is no doubt that women are very much more ready to join a *Woman's Association* than one composed of both men and women; partly because the very name leads them to feel that the matter involved is their business, partly because it seems to them less public and aggressive; partly because the meetings and other methods of any joint organization must be arranged to suit the convenience of men, and do not therefore equally suit the convenience of women.

It would have been possible, of course, for the women who undertook to form the Women's Auxiliary to have simply offered their services as individuals to the Executive Committee of the Civil Service Reform Association, but under those circumstances they could not have made any special appeal to women to come forward to help the cause, and I doubt if their efforts would have resulted in getting a quarter of the members or of the money for the Association that they have secured by the other method.

Whatever argument there may be for forming Students' Civil Service Reform Associations in colleges, instead of trying to draw the students in as individuals to existing local or State Associations, is equally strong for forming Women's Auxiliary Associations in all the cities where Associations already exist. The human mind is so constituted that an appeal to associate one's self with a distinct class of persons to which one naturally belongs (whatever the distinguishing characteristic of the class may be) is much more attractive than an appeal to join mankind at large, and it is to this natural tendency that the Woman's Auxiliary appeals.

One mistake, I think, we may have made—that is, in fixing the membership fee at \$5—and I should advise women in other States to consider whether it would not be wiser to make it \$2, or even \$1. Five dollars is sufficient to keep out many persons who otherwise would join, and a large membership is more important than any other consideration.

The methods of the Auxiliary are extremely simple—it was established, according to the constitution, "to assist the Civil Service Reform Association in promoting the objects of

the Association . . . and to raise funds to assist the Association"—and it has sought to accomplish both objects by holding parlor meetings, by circulating literature and by personal appeals.

Some women have objected to becoming members, because there was nothing especial to *do*; but to study the whole subject of Civil Service Reform thoroughly enough to be able to advocate it intelligently and help to form a public opinion favorable to it, to fit one's self to answer conclusively the objections raised to it, will be found to furnish quite enough work for any one anxious to take an active part in the fight, while the giving of money to the Auxiliary is a most important means of *doing* something to advance the cause.

As to the special service which women should render this reform, it is the one which they should render to all reforms—that is, the maintenance of *uncompromising ideals*. Men, when they are required to put ideals into practice, finding it necessary to give way a little here, to adjust a little there, are constantly in danger of lowering their standards, and of thus gradually surrendering the very essence of reform, of becoming, indeed, traitors to the highest ideal while they still believe themselves true to it. Women, on the other hand, removed from political life and having nothing to do with the difficult and bewildering task of accommodating the ideal to the possibilities of the actual, are not exposed to the temptations to be "practical" which beset men, and can therefore with much less difficulty uphold the ideal, and refuse all suggestion of compromise. This, then, is their especial function. They must prepare themselves to resist everything that tends to lower the standards and ideals of the reform—they must strengthen the hands of the idealists against the "practical" men, they must point to the eternal laws of right, and encourage those who are battling for them against compromise.

And just at the present moment such aid is especially needed. We have reached a point in the fight for the reform of the Civil Service when our success is the cause of our greatest danger—when we are threatened with actual and total defeat in the guise of victory, and when the new allies can be of the greatest service because as I have said they are peculiarly fitted to protect the weakest point in our defences.



Any reform is safe while it remains so far in its ideal stage that its supporters and defenders, whether men or women, are necessarily idealists, but as soon as it becomes successful enough to attract the support of "practical" men, then its very life is imperilled, and the astounding progress made by Civil Service Reform during the past two years exposes it to a danger, which though it seems to be double and though it makes its attack both from within and from without, is in fact one and the same. The friends of reform are in danger, on the one hand, of accepting an empty shell, failing to recognize that the substance has been stolen from them, and the foes of reform, more keen-witted, are ready to give up the shell if they are only allowed to enjoy the substance in peace. A constant watchfulness is needed to make sure that, under the new laws and new forms, the old spirit does not obtain control and render our apparent victory vain and fruitless.

The Spoils System is directly responsible for political dishonesty and for the false view of public office which obtains in the United States and it is impossible to be satisfied with the destruction of the former until the two latter are also removed—indeed it is impossible that the Spoils System should really be destroyed while the other evils continue, for a vicious circle has been created whereby the spoils system, political dishonesty and the view that public office is intended for the benefit of the officer, and not for the service of the public, alternately assume to each other the relation of cause and effect, so that the final and effectual reform of the Civil Service cannot be even hoped for until after the education of the American people in honest and correct views of politics and of public office.

To show how far these false views extend, it is only necessary to recall the fact that there are very few persons even among reformers who do not think it rather unfair that the examination for any office should be made so hard that persons of average ability should be unable to compete—but does not this simply mean that they forget what is the real end of the public service?

If the object of the public service is the *best* service of the public, it is above all things desirable that the person best fitted shall be found to fill it, and also that only those best fitted should try for it, and difficult examinations accomplish this.

If, however, the public service is to be regarded as a means of support for the public officers, then it is desirable that everybody should "have a chance" and easy examination will bring this about, but this view, if acted on at all, will result, and must result, in all the old evils of the spoils system.

There can be no mixture of motives ; either the public good or the good of the office holder must be the object in view, for, there is no doubt that, if it is the good of the office holder which is sought even remotely a good public service is impossible. In that case his need and not his fitness will be considered, and if an appointment is made because of the need of the appointee, it would be unreasonable to dismiss him because of inefficiency, since that was a matter of course, as, had he been efficient, the office would have sought him instead of his seeking the office. Thus by allowing the theory that public office is a means of benefiting the office holder, to have any weight at all, an extravagant and inefficient service naturally results in addition to the other evils.

The point to which this theory will lead even reformers was painfully exemplified last year when a man who had within a month finished his second term in an inebriate asylum was appointed to an important office in New York City, and the action was defended by two gentlemen high in official circles, by the one on the ground that it was charitable to give him the opportunity to reform, and by the other on the ground that the public was more interested than any individual could be in his reformation. In the minds of both, the fact that the public required a certain service to be done, which this man's previous life rendered him quite unfit to perform was entirely forgotten, and the public service was regarded by each as if it were his private property which he had the right to use for charitable purposes, and which, indeed it was a virtue so to use.

Before women can be of much use, however, in this great field where they are so much needed, they must educate themselves, and I can recommend no more instructive and inspiring book for the purpose than Mr. Dorman B. Eaton's "Civil Service in Great Britain; a History of Abuses and Reforms and their bearing upon American Politics." In that book Mr. Eaton did a service to the cause of Reform which is incalculable, and one which all reformers should constantly remember. He and George William Curtis (for I shall not allow the

fortunate circumstance of my near relationship to the latter to prevent my offering my tribute to him) are the two men to whom the reform owes most, and I cannot more appropriately close than with the closing words of an address on "The Relation between Morals and Politics" delivered by Mr. Curtis before the Unitarian Conference in 1878:

" \* \* \* Children as we are of men who founded a State on the Moral Law, and resolved as we are that it shall not swerve from that eternal foundation, holding that in the moral order of the Universe the right is always the politic, and pledged by our patriotic hearts to keep unstained the high ideal of our America, I appeal to you whether the moral purification of our public life is not a work of vital Christianity, and whether a wise and reasonable reform of the Civil Service would not tend to unite more closely American Morals and American Politics."

## Civil Service Reform in the West.

BY JOHN W. ELA.

AN account of Civil Service Reform in the West naturally begins at Chicago,—the starting point and center not only of this reform, but of the general movement which is gradually remodelling primitive political machinery and introducing business methods into local government throughout the middle West.

The action of the Illinois Legislature in passing the civil service bill a year ago last spring was by no means as spasmodic as it seemed to you gentlemen of the East. It had its history. The relation of cause and effect was plainly visible to those who were in the thick of the fight. A succession of purely political administrations had applied the old-fashioned spoils system so faithfully and successfully that the city found itself burdened with an enormous debt, with little or nothing to show for it. Administrations changed politically, now and then, but the system never changed. A change in administration simply meant that the names of the horde of political workers of the defeated party went off the pay-rolls and were replaced by those of the successful horde. Each new administration inherited the debt from the old one, struggled with the banks to carry it along through the two-years term, added generously to it, and passed it on to the next. Nearly the entire energies of the Mayor became concentrated on the continuous efforts to pay his political debts with the city offices and stave off payment of the floating debt of the city until the next unfortunate should step under the yoke. Meanwhile streets and alleys were not cleaned, taxes were getting higher and more uneven, expensive town offices which had become outgrown and meaningless could not be abolished because it would take fat places from the spoilsmen, and the gentlemen who had accepted offices under the administration, having paid for them with services rendered before the elec-

tion, were taking their ease in the comfortable places provided for them or were getting ready for the next campaign.

Four years before the passage of the civil service bill an organized movement was inaugurated to apply the merit system to the conduct of our city affairs. A non-partisan city ticket was nominated on this basis which polled twenty-five to thirty thousand votes. The *Daily News* was the only newspaper which supported the ticket, but the educational effect of the lively campaign was apparent two years later, when the reform sentiment had grown so strong that a citizen's ticket,—nominated on a platform of which the sole plank was the application of the merit system of appointments to every department of the city,—was put into the field by leading citizens of both parties, was endorsed by the Republican Convention, was supported by every newspaper, except one, and was only defeated by a narrow majority in favor of an exceptionally popular candidate. It looked then like a defeat for civil service reform, but it proved to be a long step towards victory; for before the next biennial election (in April, 1895) the spoilsmen had surrendered unconditionally.

In November, 1894, Mayor Hopkins appointed three members of the Civil Service Reform League of Illinois a commission to report a plan for putting the police force of the city on a civil service reform basis. The committee reported a set of rules applying the merit system to this department, which were substantially the same as those provided for in the present civil service law. These rules were adopted and were, by order of the Mayor and Superintendent of Police, put in operation by the Commission, and they continued in operation until the end of that administration, April, 1895.

The National Civil Service Reform League, on invitation of the Illinois League, held its first annual meeting in the West in Chicago the middle of December 1895; and its Proceedings, and especially the admirable address of its president, were given wide circulation. By these instrumentalities,—to say nothing of the efforts of the local league and other citizens' organizations,—the sentiment for the reform was greatly intensified.

At the opening of the Legislature in the following January the civil service bill was introduced. By that time the demand for reform had become irresistible, and soon afterwards the

committees of both political parties in Chicago declared in favor of civil service reform and endorsed the bill pending in the Legislature. I will not go over the interesting history of the passage of that bill and its adoption by the city in the election of April 1895 by 50,000 majority; interesting to you, probably, because it was the passage of the first civil service reform bill in the West. But we are chiefly concerned here as to the results.

About the first of July, 1895, the Mayor appointed an excellent commission, and it is enforcing the law intelligently and thoroughly. Every man who has been appointed to office, or has been employed, in any department of the city government, since the appointment of the commission, has been subjected to an examination calculated to ascertain his fitness to perform the duties of the place sought to be filled, and the man who passed best got the place. Of course the ideal thing would have been to have had the law go into operation with the coming in of the new administration, in April 1895. It was a change of administration from one party to the other; there was the usual cleaning out of the city offices, which were largely filled with the appointees of the old administration. If the law could have taken immediate effect all these vacancies would have been filled by competitive examination and the reform would have been in operation in a few months throughout a large proportion of the city service. The bill so provided when it went down to the Legislature, and its friends consented very reluctantly to the amendment which allowed the Mayor ninety days within which to put the law into operation. But it was argued that the bill could not pass without the amendment, and we had waited too many years to haggle now over another three months. The law now only applies to vacancies as they occur, but they are occurring in some of the departments, with refreshing frequency.

There are eight thousand places under the city government, including officers and laborers, to which this law is admitted to be applicable. That does not include the Board of Education which, however, has recently appointed a committee to apply the merit system to most of the places within the jurisdiction of that Board, excepting teachers. In the seventeen months since the law went into force the Commission has subjected over four thousand men to competitive examinations for

various official positions. Of these nearly twelve hundred have successfully passed the examinations and over five hundred of them have been certified to fill vacancies and have been appointed. Between two and three thousand laborers have passed an examination to test their fitness for the labor applied for, and nearly eight hundred of these have been put to work. About four hundred men in office have been promoted to a higher rank, as the result of examinations to determine the men in the lower rank best fitted for the higher.

Under the clause for investigation of the departments the Commission is breaking up one of the worst and most expensive frauds of the spoils system, viz.:—"Stuffing the pay-rolls,"—by which political workers, who do not work except to draw their weekly pay, are kept on the city rolls for campaign purposes. The Civic Federation looked up the evidence and instituted the proceedings before the Civil Service Commissioners and the Citizens' Association furnished the funds to pay the expense of the investigation. As a result several men holding important positions have been discharged by the administration and two were indicted by the grand jury, convicted and sent to jail.

The Commission also prosecuted a vigorous investigation into the assessment of office holders for political purposes, with the result that the practice has been rendered so hazardous that it will probably be dropped hereafter as part of the political machinery, so far as the city offices are concerned.

It used to be a convenient instrument for manipulating majorities to largely increase the police force just before an election. The excuse for this was the alleged necessity for extra policemen to maintain order at the polls. But, by a singular interposition of political providence, the men taken on for this temporary purpose were always of the same political stripe as the existing administration. Now, the Civil Service Commission has always on hand a large eligible list of applicants for police positions,—those who had passed the examinations and are waiting for vacancies,—and all requisitions for these temporary appointments are filled from this list, without regard to political affiliations or fitness for campaign work. It is remarkable how complaints of police intervention in elections for partisan purposes have disappeared under this operation of the civil service law. Four hundred of these special policemen,—from

the eligible list,—were employed at the election last month, and not a complaint has been lodged of interference or improper action, and the election was noticeably quiet.

Perhaps one of the most notable effects of the law is that the offices in the City Hall are no longer crowded with politicians after places for themselves and friends; and so all the officers, from the Mayor down, are allowed to devote themselves to the interests of the city; whereas formerly a very considerable portion of their time,—at least during the first half of their term,—was absorbed in parcelling out the plunder.

Again, the execution of the law by the Commission is effectually breaking up the “Padrone” system—the custom, which had gradually secured a strong foothold, by which a large proportion of the ignorant foreign laborers employed by the city paid a portion of their small wages every week to padrones under the belief that these men secured, or preserved, their places for them.

Although the change in the personnel of the service may be comparatively slow so long as there is no change in the politics of the administration, still the law, and its thorough execution, are gradually clearing the atmosphere and strengthening the moral tone in every department of the city government. It took time for even public officials to realize that there was a practical phase to the reform. Some of them have only recently discovered that there is such a law. Within the year, it is said, men elected to the City Council have walked over to the City Hall and submitted a list of names of their quota for appointment in some of the departments, and were apparently astonished to learn that there was a set of disagreeable officials, called the Civil Service Commissioners, who were interfering in an exceedingly obnoxious manner with this time-honored prerogative.

The intelligent politicians,—the leaders,—favor the law. The leading men of the committees of both parties have assured me that they were for the law, and do not want it interfered with. They have become disgusted with the spoils system. They say that it has proved a conspicuous failure; that it has defeated each party in succession in the last dozen years. The men who oppose the reform are those who know they would never get an office if the test were simply their fitness



to perform the duties of the office. The higher grade of politicians—politicians in the best sense—those who formulate the policy of party—rely upon their individual merit for political preferment; and this law clears the field for such men. And so while the coming Legislature will be the first since the passage of the law, and while the lower grade of partisan workers undoubtedly find the reform atmosphere a little too rarified for comfortable respiration and will probably make some clamor, I have no fear that there will be any serious attack on the law. It is the desire of its friends, including the Civil Service Commissioners in Chicago, that the law shall stand just as it is, without any attempt to amend it in any particular; and I believe that desire will be respected. I believe that the men who are going to the Legislature this year, are, as a general thing, satisfied with the law, and they know that the leaders of their respective parties are satisfied with it. I am sure the people of Chicago, of every party, regard it as advancing our city to a distinctively higher grade of civilization; that they are proud of having presented to the great West what promises to be a solution of the most puzzling civic problem of our time, viz.: the government of the modern city; in the struggle for which republican progress on this side the Atlantic has encountered disastrous failure; and I believe that at the first menace to the existence or the efficacy of this law, in any form or from whatever quarter, these people will express themselves in a manner that will be absolutely conclusive.

The merit system is also being applied to some of the County institutions in Chicago, and is unquestionably working out a very desirable reform in the conduct of those institutions. This county law applies only to the County Hospital, Insane Asylum, and employees in the County buildings and in the offices of the Superintendent of Public Service and County Agent,—where the poor relief is distributed. There are about seven hundred and fifty officers and employees altogether, men and women, to whom this applies. And, as many of these are nurses and attendants on the sick and insane, the field is peculiarly fit. The principal difficulty in the administration of this law is the small appropriation. The law only allows five thousand dollars, and as the salaries of three commissioners, at fifteen hundred dollars each, and the compensation for a stenographer, come out of that, there is little or nothing left for

other purposes. The commissioners, however, prepare and conduct the most of the examinations, and where experts are required they obtain the voluntary services of professionals in good standing. They have competitive examinations of physicians, nurses, attendants, engineers, etc., and keep eligible lists from which persons are certified for appointment as required by the law, which is similar in that respect to the city law. Although there was considerable criticism as to its execution at first, the effect of this law is plainly perceptible in the improved condition of that part of the county service which comes under its jurisdiction. But the principal county offices, like the Sheriff's, County Clerk's, County Treasurer's and Recorder's offices, await the passage of a general county civil service law, which will be one of the next steps in the reform. There are constitutional reasons why these other county offices could not be covered by the present county law.

The city law has been adopted by Evanston, a city of twenty-five thousand inhabitants, twelve miles from Chicago, and it is working to the satisfaction of everybody. When applied to small cities the machinery of the law is very simple and inexpensive, and there are already movements under way for its adoption in others of these cities. A bill for a state law, applying the merit system to all the state institutions, was introduced in the Legislature of Illinois at the last session, by Honorable W. G. Cochran, one of the ablest members, and afterward Speaker of the Special Session. Mr. Cochran is a good friend of the reform, and as he will be a leading member of the next legislature,—probably Speaker,—we may expect a strong effort, at least, to pass this bill.

In several other western states the reform is making continual progress. At the last session of the Minnesota Legislature a civil service bill passed the Senate but failed to pass the House. The local civil service league led in the effort to pass this bill; a large mass meeting was held in the Representatives' Hall at St. Paul, in the middle of the session, to promote the bill, and a strong public sentiment in its favor was aroused. The prospect for its passage at this winter's session seems promising. In St. Louis the local civil service league has been active; there is considerable enthusiasm there over the reform and charter amendments applying civil service rules to the city government which are to be submitted to a vote of the

people of the city next April. The Civic Federation, the Commercial Club and other citizens' associations have joined the local civil service league in St. Louis in its efforts for this reform. The Mayor and the President of the City Council are members of the local league. The citizens of San Francisco have also been agitating for the reform, to the effect that a new city charter containing a provision for civil service rules was submitted to the people at the late election, and was defeated by the small majority of 1,806. The defeat was due principally to other provisions of the new charter, and the civil service proposition will be again submitted at the next election. In Indianapolis are some of our leading civil service reformers. Civil service rules are now provided for in the charter of that city, but they have been temporarily set aside by the present Mayor. In New Orleans similar rules have been recently adopted by the people, applying to every department of the City Government. In the grand reform revolution, which was so magnificently successful in the New Orleans election of last spring, the adoption of the merit system was the principal demand. In Seattle also the citizens united on a demand for this system and it has been adopted by vote of the people of that city. Milwaukee and Portland, Oregon, have made a beginning; they have rules applying the merit system to certain departments only. Tacoma also adopted these civil service rules by amendment to the city charter, but the amendment has been declared void by the Courts on a technical point and the proposition will be again submitted to the people in proper form. In Ohio a bill applying the reform to such cities as adopt it passed one house. If a strong effort is made it can probably be carried in the next Legislature.

You will observe that the movement has developed concrete results in these Western states, and nearly all of them since the passage of the Illinois law. And this movement in the West is not alone along the lines of civil service reform, but is broadening into that other reform, non-partisanship in local elections, which is the logical sequel of the application of the merit system to the local appointive offices. With the elimination of the spoils system, the gang, which depends on the spoils for its existence, gradually disappears. The local gang is by far the most obnoxious fruit of the old system. It is composed wholly of the petty politicians who take no interest

in what they are pleased to call "politics" unless there looms up very distinctly at the end of the campaign a chance to divide the local offices. When a city has adopted the policy of appointing to the local offices only the men who pass examination as to fitness,—in which ability to carry "de Fift Ward" cuts no appreciable figure,—these patriotic gentlemen incontinently retire from the business of regulating the governmental policy of their country to some other field of labor, where a fair compensation is still paid for an honest day's work. Without a local gang,—that is, without the power to pay a local gang out of the public funds,—the other patriotic gentlemen who are running for the local elective offices are compelled to run on their merit, and so, naturally, the best men,—the men best fitted for the elective offices,—are brought to the front. The question of fitness governs here as well as in the appointive offices. Party politics are seen to be out of place where the question is,—Who shall take charge of a great business corporation like a city? Already parties,—where they still make nominations for the local offices,—are running business men for candidates, and are running them on the basis of their business ability. Scarcely a word of party politics is heard in the campaign; and the spectacle is presented of a political campaign with no politics in it. While I do not say that we have reached this advanced stage in political science throughout the West, there are evidences that we are well on the way.

In the municipal elections of last year, in cities in several of the western states,—Illinois, Ohio, Iowa, Wisconsin and others,—there were citizens' tickets, based upon the merit system, and in nearly every case they were successful. These cases are undoubtedly increasing from year to year. Although in many of these states there is as yet no civil service law, still these citizens' movements are distinctly on the merit system and on the line of this reform; the candidates are run on their fitness for the office and on the promise to apply the merit test in appointments to office. In fact, these organized efforts to exclude party politics from local government are an expansion of the civil service reform idea; and the public sentiment which makes them possible is the result, largely, of the spread of that reform. In communities where a civil service law continues in thorough operation it seems to me that non-partisanship in local elections must necessarily follow, and is merely a

question of time. The Voters' League of Chicago last Spring began the regeneration of the City Council—a job which they propose to finish with neatness and dispatch in the coming spring election.

In conclusion, I know you will permit me to say,—without implying any discourtesy whatever,—that the atmosphere of the West seems more congenial to the growth of civil service reform than that of the East. I know that you of the East have fought those bitter battles for a foothold, which are so peculiarly thankless, for many years; and that your experience has not only furnished us with material for a quicker development, but has, to a large extent, opened the educational feature of the campaign all over the country. I mean, therefore, to give you full credit for your share in bringing about this unusual susceptibility of the people of the West to take kindly to civil service reform.

In the West the growth of the sentiment for the reform, in all its aspects, seems to be rapid and continuous, and yet healthy; and it is already cropping out in practical legislation in many of these states. In Chicago we shall get the entire city service under the rules within five years after the passage of the law,—even if we have to change the political complexion of an administration sometimes on purpose to do it. A business proposition like that which lies at the base of this reform, and its application to matters which have heretofore been thought to be political,—in the worst sense of the word,—is readily apprehended in the West. The reign of precedent is not so imperious as in the East. The perception of the useful is keener, and the determination to test it, regardless of its youth or want of respectability, is swifter and more tenacious. Civil service reform in the West, although slow in getting its start, has had no steps to retrace; no experience with unfortunate results. Its wide significance,—its absolute necessity as the foundation of safe municipal government,—has now gained the recognition of the people,—especially those of the cities. Movements in its behalf are already becoming the tests of progress in the large western towns; the standard by which the grade of popular intelligence is judged. I believe it is only a question of time when the merit system will be permanently applied to the filling of all places in our municipalities, and when we shall be ashamed to acknowledge that there

was a period in our history when men got positions as inspectors of our drains, or assessors of our property for taxation, on the sole ground that they had rendered questionable assistance to some ward politician in his personal campaign for a more important office, for which he was equally unfit.

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## Four-Year Tenure.

BY LUCIUS B. SWIFT.

THE late Bryanite platform declared against a life tenure, charged as being built up in the public service; and Bryan himself in his letter of acceptance, and in one of the slight variations of his speech, showed that no after-thought had brought him new light. No one in America is in favor of a life tenure. It is contrary to republican government and to the spirit of American institutions. If a life tenure is being built up here, it is the duty of every one to turn in and pull down the structure. But it is well first to be sure of the fact.

A boiler-maker works through the week in the shops and at the end draws his pay. The next week is the same, and this may continue through months and even years. It might continue until from old age or other disability he is no longer able to work. The requirements are that there shall be work for him to do and that he shall be faithful and efficient. While these exist it is manifestly to the detriment of his employer to dismiss him. He may, however, be dismissed at any time because there is no work, or for any kind of misconduct, or for lack of efficiency, or for no reason whatever. Clearly, this is not a life tenure. Turning to the public service, a railway mail clerk obtains his place by competition. Having obtained it and proving himself faithful and efficient, he may work on for weeks, months and years, and even until old age or other disability renders him unfit. He may be dismissed, however, at any time because there is no work, or for any impropriety or misconduct, or for lack of faithfulness or efficiency, or for no reason whatever. This is not a life tenure, as Bryan and his convention knew. The declaration of his platform was a falsehood, fitly set with other falsehoods to aid him and other demagogues in a scheme of plunder so comprehensive that it left no interest untouched.

There is no difference between the tenure of the boiler-maker and of the clerk. The work which has been accom-

plished in the thirty years of the struggle for the merit system, largely under the leadership of this League, is the transfer from the field of politics to the field of the wage-earner of about 100,000 of the best places in the federal service. This is a tremendous fact to wage-earners. The former occupants went into these places political heelers. They had nothing at the beginning nor more at the end. It became a proverb that a place was a curse and place-seeking a guaranty of poverty. What do these places mean now? They mean the retention of manhood in getting them; they mean comfortable support of families, the acquirement of a home, the education of children and peace of mind; they mean a better and more economical public service and a great elevation of public morals. That the men who attacked and would have overthrown this system have met with overwhelming and humiliating defeat, is the most gratifying fact that has appeared in the history of civil service reform. And the unhampered power of dismissal which should be kept unhampered, except by the requirement of a written reason, is not only the guaranty of discipline and efficiency, but it is and will remain the complete answer to the charge of life tenure.

The victory and final establishment of the merit system has left much of the federal service in a curious condition. It may be described as light-headed. Most of the offices under the merit system have under-employees of long experience and high skill and efficiency. The heads have less, for the reason that they were generally appointed within four years and almost universally without knowledge of their duties or of the work to be done. The process was to go upon the street and pick up active politicians or take some beneficiary of an active politician. President McKinley will soon be asked to repeat this process because four years have elapsed since the present holders came in. Your county chairman of the party committee is expected to become post-master; your state chairman in a close state, a greater consul; your state secretary a lesser consul; your state committeeman, collector of internal revenue; your chief wire puller, district attorney, and so on; but always a place to reward actual or alleged service in carrying the election.

I wish to say a word for campaign services. I have seen them rendered for years but I have never seen them so neces-



sary or so well rendered as on the victorious side in the late campaign. An intelligent and sleepless county chairman was a most comforting assurance. Nevertheless the question of campaign service is easily settled. Much of it has always been done and always will and ought to be done without hope or expectation of reward. All which cannot for good reason be so done, and there is much, should be paid for openly and publicly out of the campaign fund; much already is so paid for. The close of the campaign should leave the account between the workers and the party balanced. It is not now regarded as balanced, and every place not within the civil service rules will be demanded of Mr. McKinley to complete the payment. The demand will be made in entire confidence that it will be acceded to on the ground that the incumbents have been in four years; and where the law does not so limit the term, it will be claimed that custom amply does.

I cannot find that in dividing spoil any distinction has been made between offices where the commissions run four years and where they run indefinitely. The fourth-class postmasters are an overwhelming evidence; with every change of party 50,000 of them have gone in and out. It is most desirable that Congress repeal the laws which seem to fix the tenure at four years. It would show that Congress had at last come up even with the progress of the reform. But it would be a serious mistake to admit that rapid and steady progress can be interrupted by the failure of Congress to perform its duty. The completion of the reform in the federal service must not be made to depend upon this repeal. Congressmen do not have us in their eye; that space is entirely occupied by party managers and workers at home. There is no longer doubt but that Congressmen are glad of the great number of places we have taken away from them and that they would be glad to see the rest taken if it could be done without their seeming to have a hand in it. But they know that primaries and conventions are still managed by a mere fraction of the party and that that fraction never forgives a shrinkage in patronage. It is well to remember also that the repeal if accomplished would not stand in the way of a President or a party intent upon destroying the merit system.

The reform can be completed in spite of the four-year laws. In all the years of this agitation I have believed that

the one unfailing source of progress and success was the will of the President acting under the powers conferred upon him by the Constitution. That is now our ample resource. Once inaugurated, the President has but to take his stand and the thing is done. The rock-bottom of that stand is that Congressmen are not part of the appointing power. There was a time when custom furnished some shadow of excuse, but in the light which accomplished reform in the federal service throws, any attempt by individual congressmen to "name" persons for places, is a presumptuous and impertinent interference with the duties of the President. Time has been when Presidents were afraid of congressmen and felt that they must yield to them. Such yielding now in face of the general contempt in which office-brokers are held could not plead any kind of necessity.

It does not make any difference how many times or how many years it is said that you can with propriety go upon the street and pick up a politician and make him the head of an office filled with skilled and experienced employees, numbers of them more fitted for the place than himself, it is not true and will never be true. Such a practice would wreck any private business. It is a fraud upon the public and it is a gross injustice in depriving under-employees of a chance of promotion. The practice will not continue because the interests of business and good sense and fairness cry out against it. Mr. McKinley is not free in the matter. He is bound by his platform and by his own repeated utterances. It will not do for him to leave his sincerity to be questioned; he must take up the work where his predecessor leaves it and go forward to the end. To urge that four-year commissions or four-year custom stand in the way would be a childish excuse. The first principle to be laid down by President McKinley is that there are no offices to be divided as spoil. The second principle is the same and the last is like unto it.

There are some 65,000 fourth-class post offices. These are destined to pass away as little political centers and except in sparsely settled districts their places will be taken by sub-stations under the control of a neighboring central authority which will bring the benefits of free delivery and good service to nearly all of the people and the employees will be within the classified service. The plan has been developed under the present administration and the new administration has but to

occupy the ground. If it is said that legislation is needed, the administration should answer that it will leave things as they are until such legislation is had. If the gross injustice of transferring so many positions of one party to the classified service should be urged, it should be answered that no such transfer is to be made but that the present incumbents have only the right of competition for the new places.

The presidential offices are a much easier problem. The President may nominate whom he will to be postmaster. He has but to direct the Civil Service Commission to prepare a scheme of promotion which under competitive tests shall bring to him out of the postal service names of men fit to be postmaster, and from these names send his nominations to the senate. This practice may be applied to every non-political office: it is not new for it is now applied in some portions of the consular service.

I desire to add that I am not wedded to a plan for any branch of the service. When there is a will there is no difficulty about a way. We can not expect congressmen to take the lead. Already the four-year signs which have been familiar to us for a life-time are re-appearing. The petition of the place-seeker is on its rounds and careful calculations are being made as to what patronage the representative of the right party stripe will control, and what senator or party leader will "name" men for places in districts of the wrong stripe. Men are working with members elect of legislatures to secure their votes for senatorial candidates and the federal offices which the successful candidate will control are having their usual weight in the contest. Congressmen willing or unwilling seem to acquiesce and participate in this old-fashioned movement for a division of spoil and in such ways as deciding whether or not elections shall be held for post masters have assumed the air of ownership. It is unsafe to rely upon their voluntarily voting themselves to be law makers and nothing more. It will be President McKinley's duty to break this practice up. There would be some opposition; the opposition would be noisy, but after all it would only embrace a small fraction of the President's party, and would be helpless against the President sustained by the ample power of the constitution and by the approval of the great body of the people.

## Civil Service Commissions Essential to Civil Service Reform.

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BY HON. DORMAN B. EATON.

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THE enemies of civil service reform in the State of New York are preparing for a combined assault upon her reform system at the next session of her legislature. This assault will be novel in kind, highly plausible in theory, and well calculated to deceive the friends of reform who do not understand the practical methods essential for its success. Yet, if it shall prevail, it is sure to be—as it is intended to be—disastrous to the reform policy of the State.

The direct object, and only avowed purpose of the assault, is to deprive the state commission of essential power over the examinations—if possible to supersede the Commission altogether—and substitute for the present examinations under it, a series of detached and miscellaneous examinations under which the official head of every department and great office—State and Municipal alike—will have a special examination to be devised and controlled by himself, which will be the only one required for entrance to the part of the public service over which he presides. Though it is not admitted to be a part of the scheme to allow every head of a bureau and division—in State and city departments—to have an examination to suit himself, the logic and tendency of the proposed new system of disintegration and feebleness will make this result, which every boss, spoils-system politicians, greatly desires—both inevitable and speedy.

We shall be told that, under the new plan proposed, the examinations upon which we insist will continue, that merit and fitness will be tested by them, and that there will be the competition which is required by the New York constitution of 1895. This constitution proclaims a noble reform policy in these memorable words: “Appointments and promotions in the civil service of the State and of all the civil divisions

thereof, including cities and villages, shall be made according to merit and fitness to be ascertained, so far as practicable, by examinations, which, so far as practicable, shall be competitive."

The leaders of this assault will declare their object to be, not to defeat this constitutional policy, not to suppress anything of real value, but merely to improve the agencies by which Civil Service reform and this policy are to be made effective, without the incumbrance and expense of a civil service commission. In fact, our assailants present themselves as advanced reformers, who merely seek to improve the methods of the old reformers.

For mere scheming politicians, patronage mongering party managers, and bosses to pretend to seek the advancement of civil service reform, which they have always opposed and now detest, and the more efficient execution of this new constitutional policy, which they have bitterly resisted, and which now threatens the speedy extinction of the spoils system by which they prosper, is a piece of audacious and mendacious impudence as incommensurable as it is grotesquely ridiculous. The appetite of the tiger and the shark may doubtless be greatly modified, but before we can trust them, it is prudent to have some evidence of a change of taste.

The leaders of this assault have for two years in succession refused—despite the exhortations of the Governor—to discharge their plain duty to enact a law in aid of the execution of this high constitutional policy. This refusal to enact such a law, which the Constitution in express terms requires, is, in substance, a violation of their oaths of office, a deliberate and treasonable defiance of their duty to obey the Constitution, and a cowardly rebellion against the form of government under which they live. That this treacherous policy has been pursued—in conspiracy with the Tammany leaders—in the hope of defeating the purpose of the constitution and the will of the people—is a fact too plain to be doubted.

The simple fact that the enemies of reform seek to suppress commissions is, in substance, an avowal of the further facts that they find them an effective force in restraint of the spoils system, and very troublesome bodies in the way of all those who seek, under that system, to grasp and distribute patronage and spoils for personal and party gain. If bosses, politicians, and thrifty patronage-mongers do not think they

could more easily enforce party tests at the gates of office, more readily foist their ignorant and unworthy favorites upon the public service, more easily extort political assessments for party purposes from the public servants, under the new examinations they propose than under examinations controlled by commissions, why do they combine for a common assault upon these bodies? . . . It is certainly possible that they have become reformers. But has any of them the courage to declare it to be their object, to make civil service reform methods more effective, to put men into the public service upon their merits irrespective of party opinions, to arrest political assessments, or to restrain the despotic domination of the boss or the partisan majority?

Every person acquainted with the methods of the spoils system,—especially if he has had experience as a Civil Service Commissioner—knows that there are three main sources of hostile influence which civil service reform and every commissioner must encounter: (1) the selfish efforts of individuals who seek offices and gain for themselves and their relatives at the cost of the people; (2) unpatriotic and unscrupulous public officers, who prostitute their power over appointments and removals for paying their political debts, for conferring benefits upon their favorites and henchmen, and for placing their party managers under obligations to advance them to higher offices; and, (3) —and most potent of all—debased political parties, their bosses and leaders who constantly exert their power, in violation of the civil service law and rules, for enforcing party tests, for conferring office by favor, for evading the examinations—for coercing and deceiving civil service commissioners, and for extorting assessments from the public servants and compelling them to be servile to party electioneers.

The new system of examinations proposed would, with most grotesque absurdity, give the direct control of them to the second class of these irrepressible enemies, who are chosen by the third class. The very forces and persons whom the examinations most need to restrain would be given direct control of them. The wolves would be chosen to protect the sheep. Every civil service commissioner has given a very large portion of his exertions—I certainly gave one-third of mine—to resisting the pressure and defeating the conspiracies of these enemies. It is difficult to say which has been the most frequent

and the most difficult to defeat, the machinations and corrupt efforts of party bosses and managers out of office, for evading and cheating the examinations, or the frauds and perversions of unworthy politicians, in office for the same purpose. Therefore to hand over to them—or either of them—the control of the examinations would be the merest stupidity and madness, sure to be fatal to the cause of reform.

The salutary utility of commissions results very naturally from their organization, powers and duties. Adherents of different parties must be among their membership, which makes party favoritism nearly impossible; the entire proceedings of commission must be public and a matter of record; they have everywhere to deal with the rival and suspicious competitors, who are interested and ready to expose every fault; they are required to disregard party opinions and resist party pressure; they are constantly liable to be called to account in Congress and legislatures by hostile politicians anxious to discredit them; commissions have a duty to investigate and expose frauds and the use of partisan influence in the examinations and in all administrative offices, which naturally inclines all unworthy officers and professional politicians to dread them, and to try to discredit them by false charges; they have a duty—essentially judicial—to enforce a great, salutary, non-partisan principles of equality and justice according to stringent provision of laws which impose grave penalties for infidelity; they are required to submit detailed reports of all their proceedings, which makes it very difficult to conceal their own faults; they are supported by the power and prestige of Presidents and Governors—so far as the latter are faithful to their duty, instead of prostituting their power for party ends.

It should, therefore, be no matter of surprise that both the moral and the legal power of commissions has been much greater for good administration than most people have supposed. It is perfectly natural, therefore, that they should be both feared and hated by the whole class of ringsters, unworthy officers, and patronage mongering politicians.

Though all these enemies of reform who see with dismay their vicious patronage diminishing have done their utmost to discredit the commissions and arrest the reform of which they are an essential support, their efforts have been a dismal failure—especially in the National service and in that

of the State of Massachusetts. Every one of their attacks has been utterly repulsed. They have not proven an offense committed by any Commissioner. They have not shown a single one of hundreds of thousands of questions to be unfit. It is true that Congressmen have sometimes, in cowardly secrecy, voted against appropriations for the work of reform, but the dread of public opinion has compelled them to change their votes when the public record of them would expose their authors to the indignation of the people. These enemies have seen with alarm, the examinations, which in 1883 extended to only about 14,000 places in the National service, now extending to about 85,000 such places. They have seen the cause of reform within that period grandly triumph and pass out of the sphere of controversy in the State of Massachusetts. They have seen this—to them mysterious—advance with all the more anxiety because it has everywhere marked the triumph of non-partisan public opinion over party opinion and party managers, and they can form no conception of the possible potency of this victorious opinion in the near future.

Is it any wonder, then, that these enemies in New York are alarmed,—that they are resolved to suppress the existing examinations and to provide for others which they can manage for their own advantage, without being obstructed by a commission, or exposed by its reports? They as naturally dread a Civil Service Commission as a criminal dreads a court, or a heathen dreads a missionary.

The enemies of reform see, with wonder and alarm, more than a hundred grades of examinations in the National service, and perhaps two-thirds as many in that of New York, carried forward harmoniously and economically under Commissions, everywhere bringing men and women of superior character and capacity into the public service and raising it in the estimation of the people; everywhere disregard party and sectarian opinions; everywhere rejecting party tests and withstanding party influence; everywhere diminishing the patronage and limiting the vicious influence which strengthen the spoils system, and make the positions of the party boss and the party managers both potential and profitable. Should we be surprised if they are angry and arm for a desperate assault.

The people are more and more clearly seeing that the ex-



aminations as conducted under commissions, are as favorable to true party action as they are to the common school system and to the suppression of the patronage and spoils by which voters are bribed and party managers are made despotic and rich.

These examinations facilitate the choice of members of the legislature who represent not a boss, or mere factions, but the people, and the true interests of every district—members who, in that body, will dare say what they think well. Among the 2613 persons examined under the Massachusetts Commission in the past year—and the ratio is much the same everywhere—2,578 of them had only a common school education, while only 35 of them had attended college. In such relations with the common schools and the people who support them we may see one of the sources of that potential public opinion—likely to be much stronger in the future—which makes civil service reform irresistible.

In managing machine politics and the spoils system the enemies of reform can see the advantages of centralized organization and combined power, and they use them to the utmost in every locality and at every point where their system is attacked. The duty of feudal obedience on the part of every local organization to the central State machine—and even to the boss at its head—is constantly inculcated. The freedom of local representation has been thus impaired, and every local candidate for the legislature feels the need of deferring to the State boss. The Briarian arms of the central machine—a sort of political octopus—are thrust out and made potent in every county, town and village election; its power curtails the freedom of every member of the Legislature, making it nearly impossible, save under servile conditions, to procure the passage of any law in the interest of his constituents. This same central power largely dictates local appointments and removals, and degrades the public servants into party electioneering vassals.

Yet, with astounding audacity, the supporters of the spoils system—the men who are themselves the very embodiment of centralized control—insist that the friends of non-partisan justice and reform and the supporters of the State constitution shall, in their contest with these enemies, have no central organization, no commission to see that the examinations are every-

where just and reasonable, and to repel the attacks and expose the misrepresentations of their combined enemies. They seek to divide and isolate the examinations, and deprive them of salutary supervision and support, so that the whole horde of their confederated assailants may attack and defeat them in detail.

If the general of one of two armies arrayed for battle should propose to the other that he and the members of his staff should be at once taken off the field, and that his army should be divided into many separate detachments, the proposal must be thought sublimely impudent—but is it any more so than the proposal of our assailants?

It would be far better for the ultimate and speedy triumph of reform to repeal at once all laws upon the subject rather than to allow deceptive and fraudulent examinations to bring its very name into contempt.

Every one familiar with civil service examinations knows how easily, in charge of their enemies, they could be prostituted for personal and party advantage. At least one Governor of New York has strikingly illustrated this fact, and our enemies hope to make another follow his disgraceful example.

Yet, these evils, sure to result from examinations not supervised by a Commission, are hardly the worst. If every head of a department and great office is to have examinations to suit himself, he must be allowed to make the rules for regulating them, to fix the conditions of entering them, and the kind of character and the measure of capacity necessary for passing them, and for gaining appointments. He will select the one he prefers from among all those examined. True and honest competition such as the New York Constitution requires will no longer exist. The examiners must be appointed by him, and they will be compliant to his will. Thus every such officer will, in substance, fix the conditions of entering and remaining in the public service under him.

Inevitably, every one who is standing as a candidate for an office having this power appendant will be regarded by the voters and party leaders as having the ability, when elected, to give him an office—if need be, by making a removal to create a vacancy. Here we should have the establishment of the spoils system by law—the very thing our assailants seek. The office-seekers and spoilsmen would demand

promises of office as the condition of giving the candidate their support. Such promises would be made and would be fulfilled. The examinations would be so manipulated—as they could easily be if there was no commission—that these election pledges could be redeemed. It is obvious that such a system would favor the most unfit and unscrupulous candidates, for they would promise the easiest admission to office and the most unjustifiable removals, and they would thus win the basest voters. More and more the examinations would tend to become a sham and a fraud. There would, we repeat, be no real competition, such as the constitution of New York requires, but a mere scrub-race between bribed voters and the local favorites of factions, bosses and heads of departments—the effective competing forces being party influence, boss power and miscellaneous pulls.

Let us turn from theory and reasoning to the admonishing lessons of history on the subject. The intolerable evils in English civil service, which resulted from allowing the heads of departments and offices—largely dominated by partisan members of Parliament and great politicians—to select their own subordinates, began to arrest the serious attention of statesman as early as 1820.

Examinations were introduced in various departments and offices, soon after 1841, and they had become known in the United States before 1853. They were isolated examinations for each department and office, though to a limited extent they were competitive in theory though not in fact. The conception of a Civil Service Commission, or the need of it had not apparently been developed. A very resolute patriot or reformer in office might without a commission enforce effective examination subject to his control for entering the service under him. But the ordinary officer controlling such examinations could and did easily make them serviceable to himself, his favorites, his relations, and his party. It soon appeared that he would not withstand party pressure. Patronage mongering members of Parliament and party managers could concentrate their combined influence for controlling these isolated examinations, and they soon began to do so effectively. As a result, the most unfaithful officers readily yielded, and consequently they were most liked, and were aided by the spoilsmen, ringsters, and corrupt party leaders. The examinations—unaided as

they were by any commission—could not arrest unworthy party favorites and consequently the examinations became steadily degraded—lower and lower standards for admission prevailing until they became, in large part, a farce and a false pretence. In the words of Mr. Mill they excluded “only mere dunces.” They demoralized administration. Only members of the ruling party were admitted to the examinations at all.

The English for more than half a generation tried these isolated examinations—to which our New York politicians now wish to revert—when the government had become convinced of the indispensable need of a strong civil service commission for devising and taking charge of all examinations. Such a commission was provided in May, 1855. It withstood the politicians from the first, and made the examinations everywhere just and effective. Its popularity increased, and its jurisdiction was more and more extended. It has continued down to this time, without scandal, discharging its duties with great advantage to the public service of Great Britain, and to the cause of popular education. The commission and its doings soon ceased to be subjects of controversy; party tests were everywhere excluded from the administrative service; men of high character and capacity readily entered it; parties and politicians soon ceased to attempt to obstruct the commission. Yet legitimate party contests over party principles are—to say the least—as vigorous and salutary in Great Britain as in any other country of the world. So completely has mere partisan influence, and patronage-mongering been excluded from its administration that, at the last change of ministry, there were, save as to a very few unimportant places accidentally left out of the examinations—as the Author of the American Commonwealth has declared—less than a hundred changes made altogether for party reasons, or on account of political opinions. No postmaster, no collector, no heads of bureaus or divisions and no clerks are changed in Great Britain as the result of a new administration coming into power.

Experience in this country may teach us a similar lesson.

The old party spoils system had become unendurable here before 1853. The original examinations in England had attracted attention in the United States. Laws enacted in 1853 and 1855 provided for the classification of clerkships in the great departments, and in some of the local offices, and exam

inations were required before appointments could be made to these clerkships. But, unfortunately, these examinations were under the control of the heads of the departments and offices; they were in no true sense made competitive, and there was no commission to take charge of them. Parties and their managers as they had done in England—as well as members of Congress, combined their attacks upon the officers having charge of the examinations, who were unable to make any effective resistance to their demands. Parties and their leaders took care that no man should be placed at the head of one of these departments or offices who was not likely to comply with their demands in regard to examinations. The new system soon became a source of official degradation. The experience of England was repeated. Soon every applicant for a clerkship not belonging to the party in power—if not everyone not belonging to the ruling faction of this party—was excluded from the examinations; there was no true competition; and from among those examined, those were appointed who were backed by the strongest party and official influence, and who were likely to be the most useful for doing party work. As in England, these isolated examinations excluded mere dunces, but they soon became, in the main, a farce and a fraud. Col. Silas W. Burt,—now a New York Civil Service Commissioner, and a veteran, to whom the cause of reform is greatly indebted for invaluable services in its behalf—has kindly supplied me with an interesting and characteristic illustration from his own experience. He applied for admission as a clerk at the Naval Office, in New York, in 1869. The only questions asked him were these: “What is the capital of the United States?” “How much is eight times eight?” He was admitted to the office he sought. Is it unkind to suggest that our assailants would be satisfied with examinations like this? We have no space for tracing further the evils or the uselessness of this kind of examinations which our New York spoilsmen now seek to re-establish.

As in England, this experiment in the United States led to the development of an intelligent reform sentiment, and to a clear conception of the indispensable need of a Civil Service Reform Commission which should have charge of all examinations. We can now clearly see that the whole contest for civil service reform in this country has been in substance for

the establishment of a kind examinations which will exclude party tests and make true non-partisan competition of capacity and character possible. The primary purposes of seeking to suppress the Commission and to establish feeble and isolated examinations, are obviously these: (1) that no one not a member of the dominant party shall be admitted to the examinations; (2) no one who passes the examinations shall be appointed unless he belongs not only to the ruling party, but to the ruling faction of this party.

We cannot too much emphasize the fact that the noble advance in the cause of non-partisan administration in the two great English speaking nations has in the main been achieved through competitive examinations under the charge of commissions sustained by public opinion rather than party opinion. For more than 40 years, they have been tested on a grand scale in England, and for more than 13 years in the United States; and never, in either country, were they more popular, more potential for good, or apparently more certain to overcome all enemies than they are at this moment. In Great Britain the methods of civil service reform have long since ceased to be matters of controversy and its few enemies are regarded as curiosities, and as bourbons. The rapid advance of the reform in the national service of the United States—a service under which a single commission has charge of all examinations, has astonished its friends as much as it has dismayed its enemies; the new president is its sincere supporter, and is likely to do whatever wise things in its behalf, the patriotic achievements of President Cleveland have left undone. In Massachusetts, where a single state commission—which every Governor has supported—controls all examinations, even those in cities, the reform policy is supreme, and is questioned only by a small class of benighted spoilsmen and besotted partisans who are powerless for evil and without hope in the future. The city of Chicago—suddenly springing to the lead of many cities in the west well advanced in the cause of reform—has by popular vote established a powerful commission in control of all examinations, which is enforcing the reform system with great usefulness and promise. Over against these records our assailants have nothing which they can cite, but the history of the spoils system degradation under their proposed method which we have set forth. If they refer

to the independent examinations for the police force of New York city, they are condemned by President Roosevelt—a most competent judge—and Mayor Strong has refused to allow independent examinations for the New York Fire Department. The State of New York, under a worthy Commission appointed by Governor Cleveland, entered upon the work of reform as auspiciously as did the State of Massachusetts. But the next two Governors of New York—very much unlike Governor Cleveland, and their contemporaries in Massachusetts—yielding to the base elements of their party, gave the Commission no adequate support, which led to its powers being perverted for party advantage. Governor Morton has done much, by revising the rules and enlarging the powers and duties of the commission, to enable it to fitly discharge its functions, and to much advance the cause of reform. There is now every prospect—save for the proposed assault—that the State of New York will make a creditable record and become a leader in the cause of reform. If Mr. Morton could be Governor for two years more, the struggle of the spoilsmen for supremacy would be made hopeless, and the abiding triumph of reform would be achieved. Much now depends upon whether Mr. Black, the new Governor of New York, shall decide to lead the higher, or shall prefer to yield to the lower forces of his party, whether he shall take patronage-mongering Governor Hill for his model, and court his shameless and ignominious fate and the disruption of his party, or shall rise to the level of Governor and President Cleveland, of President Harrison, Governor Morton—and of all the Governors of Massachusetts—the latter of whom have vetoed every bill which has threatened the reform in the state. I do not believe that the new Governor will accept orders from any boss, yield to the demands of the spoil system faction of his party, or fail to comprehend the duty of a governor to support the policy of the constitution. He was elected in the faith that he had the capacity and independence of a statesman, and that he would comprehend the rare opportunity—such as hardly any Governor of New York has ever had—to make his administration a great honor to himself and an abiding blessing to his State and the nation. The majority of the voters never imagined that—under the lead of a politician who, fifteen years ago, tried to subjugate a President of

the United States to the rebellious Senators from New York—the new Governor would aid a traitorous attempt of the spoils system factions of both parties to defeat a constitutional provision—adopted by the people—by means of rebellion and hostile action in the legislature—a rebellion in no wise less dangerous and flagitious than would exist if the spoilsmen, in that body, should with arms in their hands prevent the competitive examinations which the Constitution of New York requires. Well may it be asked, What is the use of constitutional requirements if Governors and partisan majorities may, by conspiring together, defeat their policy and the will of the people? Tens of thousands of Democrats—with a patriotic sense of duty of which our assailants seem to have little conception—swelled the majority of the new Governor and helped save the country from peril and disgrace. It would be strange ingratitude and meanness to connive at a change in our system of examination—a retrogression to partisan barbarism—which is intended to, and would, probably, cause the removal of every democrat who, upon his superior merits, has won an appointment, and which would certainly prevent any more democrats being appointed through the examinations. These are primary objects of our assailants. Under such conditions it is the imperative duty of the friends of reform and of every one who cares for the honor and political civilization of New York to make his influence felt to the utmost against the assault now threatened. If the conspiring spoilsmen, now led by the bosses of both parties, shall be defeated at Albany this winter, the spoils system will be crushed, and the noble principle of the constitution of New York, and the will of her people, will be permanently established.

It does not come within the scope of this paper to deal with the constitutional question which its subject involves. But, in conclusion, I wish to say that I think the new examinations proposed would not provide for the competitive examinations which the constitution of New York requires, and that the old spoils system is not likely to be re-established by law, for the very purpose of defeating its provisions, until they have been interpreted by the highest court of the State, which has given significant evidence of its purpose to uphold them.



## Efficiency and Economy Under the Merit System.

REMARKS OF HON. JOHN R. PROCTER,  
*President of the United States Civil Service Commission.*

IT was held by Senators and Representatives in Congress, when the civil service law was under debate, that the federal service under the patronage system was inefficient, more or less corrupt, and extravagant; that unnecessary positions were created and unnecessary salaries paid on account of pressure for office under that system. It was also promised that the merit system would, if adopted, result in a more economical administration of the Government. The two systems have been working side by side in Washington for more than thirteen years, and it is practicable to make comparisons of their relative advantages and disadvantages. There are thousands of positions included under the merit system, subject to competitive examinations provided by the Commission. There are also thousands of positions which were not classified until recently, and other thousands over which the Civil Service Commission still has no jurisdiction. It may easily be demonstrated whether the one system is extravagant and the other economical. I will give you figures showing the increases and decreases in numbers and salaries in the legislative, executive and judicial branches in the City of Washington since the organization of the Commission. It has not been practicable as yet to prepare statistics for those branches of the service outside of Washington, but it is believed that they would not differ materially in the results they would show :

### THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH.

(Unclassified.)

	1883.	1896.
Number of subordinate officers and employees in the Senate.....	154	326
Total amount appropriated for salaries....	\$276,044.60	\$432,228.90

103

Increase in number of employees.....		172
Per cent. of increase.....		112
Number of subordinate officers and employees in the House of Representatives.....	197	591
Total amount appropriated for salaries... \$364,028.20		\$624,022.91
Increase in number of employees.....		394
Per cent. of increase.....		200

JUDICIAL BRANCH.

(Unclassified.)

Number of subordinate officers and employees.....	6	89
Total amount appropriated for salaries... \$15,000.00		\$114,150.00
Increase in number of employees.....		82
Per cent. of increase.....		1383

EXECUTIVE BRANCH.

(Unclassified portion.)

Number of positions requiring appointment by the President and confirmation by the Senate (Departmental).....	88	107
Total amount appropriated for salaries for Presidential positions in Washington... \$345,200.00		\$456,590.00
Increase in number of Presidential appointees.....		19
Per cent. of increase.....		22
Number of unclassified and other positions (not subject to competitive examination).....	7,847	10,760
Total amount appropriated for unclassified positions... \$6,792,377.00		\$9,764,252.00
Increase in number of unclassified positions.....		2,913
Per cent. of number in unclassified positions.....		37

EXECUTIVE BRANCH.

(Classified portion.)

Number of classified positions subject to competitive examination by original classification.....		5,530
Total amount appropriated for competitive positions... \$7,035,820.00		\$6,960,602.00
Number of original competitive positions still existing.....		5,414
Decrease in number of original competitive positions.....		116

Per cent of decrease in number of original competitive positions.....	2
Decrease in appropriations for salaries for original competitive positions.....	\$75,218
Percent of decrease in appropriations for salaries for original competitive positions	1

The statement of unclassified Executive positions includes the positions which have from time to time been added to the competitive list by extensions of the classified service. More than 4,000 (?) of these were added to the competitive list by the recent extensions, which have reduced the positions at Washington not subject to competitive examination approximately to 4,821 (?).

It will be seen, therefore, that every branch of the Federal service at the Capital has increased largely since the organization of the Commission, except those positions which are subject to competitive examinations, where the increases have occurred not by extra appropriations but by extensions of the competitive list to cover existing unclassified and other positions not open to competition, until at present there are over 11,000 (?) positions in Washington subject to competitive examination. The statistics show that the number of classified clerkships and copyist positions in Washington have decreased 3.9 per cent. in number since 1883, effecting a saving of \$228,200, while the unclassified positions of messengers, the employees of the Government Printing Office, and others recently added to the competitive list, together with the positions which remain unclassified by law, increased 37 per cent. in number, involving an extra yearly expenditure for salaries of \$2,971,875, an increase of 43 per cent. If the patronage system had continued unchecked, and the positions originally made competitive had increased in the same proportion as the unclassified positions, as a result of additional appropriations, it would require an extra yearly expenditure of \$3,100,620 for salaries in Washington alone.

There are numerous specific instances in which the saving in the cost of administration effected by the merit system has been demonstrated. A few of these I will cite by way of illustration.

The last report of the Superintendent of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing shows that while the work performed has increased more than 77 per cent. since the application of the rules, the force has increased during the same period not more than 11 per cent. The Government Printing Office is another instructive exhibit. A year ago, before the rules were applied, the number of employees was 3,500. At the present time, with 35 per cent. more work, the total is 2,600. The Secretary of Agriculture in his recent report shows that as a result of the operation of the rules in his Department, while the work has been increased and extended in many new directions, there has been a reduction in the force of 280 employees, and that during the period since March 7, 1893, more than \$2,000,000 out of a total of \$11,000,000 of appropriations has been covered back into the Treasury.

Another striking instance is found in the comparative records of efficiency in the Railway Mail Service. The latest obtainable figures show that while the number of pieces of mail matter distributed per clerk has increased from 1,222,762 in 1885 to 1,779,759 in 1896, the ratio of errors to the number of pieces distributed correctly has decreased from one error to each 5,575 distributed correctly in 1885 to one for each 9,843 pieces distributed correctly in 1896. It is to be noted, too, that the year 1885 was, up to that time, one of exceptional efficiency in distribution. The ratio of errors in 1887 dropped to 3,364, and in 1890, following the numerous removals made just prior to the application of the civil service rules, to one in 2,834. The increase in efficiency since the adoption of the rules, as indicated by the ratio of errors, has been, therefore, about 400 per cent.

Another evidence of the superior results secured under the merit system is found in the comparative record of removals. In the classified departmental service at Washington the removals from competitive positions for all causes have been less than 2 per cent. a year, while in the unclassified and excepted branches the changes have aggregated, in the four years past, probably 50 per cent. From these figures the conclusion must be drawn that either the persons brought in through the examinations are far more efficient than the others, or that the removals from the unclassified positions have been made for causes other than the good of the service.

The decrease in the proportion of employees appointed after competitive examination, and rejected during the probationary period, is very significant. In the Railway Mail Service in 1890 there were 150 such rejections; in 1892, 70; in 1894, 18, and in 1896 only 5.

The results of the work of the Commission during the last thirteen years ought, in fact, to be more than gratifying to the advocates of civil service reform. Their claims for the merit system have been fully realized. Wherever the civil service rules have been applied the service has been improved, extravagance has been checked, and the chances of corruption in office by the sale of positions, or by their disposal for considerations other than those of merit and fitness, have been removed. With the extension of the classified service to cover practically all positions in the Executive service which under the existing statute can be included, efficiency and economy should, and doubtless will, become the underlying principles in the administration of the Government.

## Results of Reform in the Department of Agriculture.

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ADDRESS OF HON. J. STERLING MORTON.

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It is related of a certain American citizen that he arrived at the age of fifty years without having indulged in any marked peculiarities or frivolities, except a too constant attendance upon the theatre. He was always foremost among "first-nighters," and loudly laughed or silently wept as the play went. Each succeeding drama, tragedy or comedy, was to him more realistic than its predecessor. His satisfactions and enjoyments were consummate and intense. But at last an unwise friend induced him to attend a "rehearsal" and there he saw all the mechanism of the stage and listened to the uninteresting recital of the parts. His illusions were dispelled. He never again enjoyed a play or an opera.

And now, in the presence of the members of the Civil Service Reform League of the United States, the foregoing comes to my mind, because it somewhat illustrates my past and my present position relative to the public service. Arriving in Washington early in March, 1893, with a very indefinite knowledge of the Departmental positions and the services which they require, I was inducted to office entertaining the idea that the old system of appointments was probably well enough and good enough for practical as well as political purposes. Those views were the result, no doubt, of the patriotic esteem in which Senators and Representatives in Congress had been held by me and those with whom I came in daily contact. It never then occurred to me that any American citizen was in public life purely for personal ends or personal gains. It had never dawned upon my mind that the patriotism exhibited upon the stump was stage, and not real love of country. No

suspicion had permanently lodged in my mind that statesmen ever sought offices for their relatives and friends and billeted them upon Departments for the mere sake of relieving themselves of the duties of kinship and friendship.

But my illusions and delusions were suddenly dispelled by the innumerable collusions which I detected between statesmen and those relatives and retainers whom they sought to impose upon the public service without considering their efficiency, fitness or adaption for that service.

My primary experience was in regard to the position of Appointment Clerk in the Department of Agriculture. The incumbent of that office had been appointed by my predecessor, Secretary Rusk, and had held the place about two years. He was a man more than fifty years of age, thoroughly qualified, punctiliously exact and conscientious in the performance of all his duties. He had faithfully kept the records, as far as they could have been made up under the patronage or political system, of the merits of each employee. He knew the day and hour when each came into the service, when each had been promoted or demoted, and the salary of each. He knew how many days of sick-leave and how many days of vacation had been given to each every year. The archives of the office of the Appointment Clerk were as complete and perfect as they could have been made under the then existing spoils system of appointments. But immediately upon induction to office I was assailed with the importunities of Representatives in Congress from the State whence came this Appointment Clerk, to displace him, because he was a Republican, and to put a gentleman whom they named into the position, because he was a Democrat. No Congressman or Senator suggested educational qualifications or peculiar personal merits as factors in the case. Then I began to see the importance of a Classified Service.

In the very beginning of my duties as Secretary of Agriculture I had been solicited, importuned, imperatively ordered, in short, to deprive myself and the Department of a faithful, honest and efficient officer, and thus to cripple my capabilities for intelligently managing the Department, and to minimize the value of its public service, by accepting for that clerkship a person utterly ignorant of the details of its duties.

The importunities continued; the importunists were put

off from day to day, until my official life became burdensome to such an extent, that I could see only one way of extricating myself from the torments which the spoils system provides for those who may have Departmental places at their disposal. And that way led up to and through the Classified Service. Therefore, I asked the President to place the position of Appointment Clerk, by special order, within that service. This was readily accomplished, because, as you know, there is no more genuine or courageous advocate of the reform of the Civil Service than President Cleveland.

Soon after the classification, the statesmen from the West who were so anxious to provide me with a raw recruit, by displacing a skilled veteran, called again. They were informed politely that, while I could remove the incumbent, they could not name his successor, nor could I name his successor, because the position had been placed in the Classified Service. They were amazed; they were indignant. And when informed that the Secretary of Agriculture had secured the classification of this position, their indignation was such that it found vent only through the door and out of the Department.

But, as the Executive branches of the federal Government have no right to demand appointments from the Legislative branch, it is difficult to determine upon what law or alleged right, Representatives and Senators may claim to place their favorites in departmental service and then hold the heads of Departments responsible for results.

Permit me, briefly, to give you an epitome of the relation of the United States Department of Agriculture during the last twelve years to the classified service. The Department was first placed under the operation of the civil service law on December 12, 1884, by the inclusion of 118 persons and the positions they occupied, in the classified service. That was by order of President Arthur. On June 30, 1888, the service was extended by order of President Cleveland, and 116 more positions were included. On January 5, 1893, President Harrison ordered observers and local forecast officials employed outside the District of Columbia in the Department of Agriculture, numbering 314, into the classified service.

On March 20, 1894, the position of Appointment Clerk of the Department was added to the list of classified places.

July 1, 1894, the classified service in the Department was



extended so as to include all inspectors and assistant inspectors in the Bureau of Animal Industry, numbering at that time 67 men. The duty of these inspectors is to examine and pass on the sanitary condition of live animals, first, and afterwards to examine all carcasses of slaughtered animals which are intended for interstate or foreign trade. They either accept or reject, after determining sanitary conditions by ante-mortem and post-mortem investigations. It occurred to me that this inspection, carried on by laymen who were entirely unversed in veterinary science, was a waste of money and a farce. Inspection should inspect. Only those learned in the pathology of domestic animals and skilled in veterinary science, could render service in this line worth paying for or commensurate with the requirements of the public health and the good name of American meats, intended, either at home or abroad, for human consumption. Therefore, at my suggestion, this classification was made, and as a condition precedent to securing an examination for an inspectorship or assistant inspectorship before the United States Civil Service Commission, all applicants must exhibit diplomas from reputable veterinary colleges. Thus began the building up of an inspection system which has been of inestimable advantage to American meats in the home market and also in foreign markets. The certification of the healthfulness and wholesomeness of edible meats by inspectors of the United States Department of Agriculture has credit in all markets, co-equal with that certification of a United States mint which assures the fineness and weight of a gold or silver coin.

On June 6, 1894, the professors of meteorology in the Weather Bureau were brought into the classified service.

It will be seen that up to this time, after my conviction of the error which I had entertained as to the possibilities of carrying on departmental work honestly and efficiently under the old spoils system, my conversion had steadily evolved until now I began to feel the value and necessity of the saving grace of a classified service in every division and bureau of the Department. Consequently, on July 12, 1894, the chiefs and assistant chiefs of Entomology, and of Ornithology and Mammalogy, were included in the classified service, and on November 6, 1894, the chief and assistant chief of Pomology were likewise included.

On November 2, 1894, messengers, assistant messengers, plant-mounters and folders were added to the list, by order of the President. These numbered 117.

On July 1, 1895, having been taught by the experience evolved under the satisfactory operation of previous Presidential orders classifying positions in the Department, and having become fully convinced that the business of the Government could be properly conducted only by a system and a discipline such as obtained in a private business,—the chief and assistant chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry, all chiefs and assistant chiefs of all divisions, experts, artists, state statistical agents; microscopists, assistant microscopists, taggers, stock-examiners, clerks and agents of the Bureau of Animal Industry, numbering 754 persons, were, by the order of the President of the United States, brought into the classified service.

On May 6, 1896, by the same process, all persons assigned to do any kind of clerical work were brought into the classified service, and on June 10, 1896, *all persons doing any kind of classified service work not previously brought into the classified service were then included*; so that the private secretary to the Secretary of Agriculture is the only person excepted from the Civil Service rules in that Department, who is not a mere manual laborer.

It is only fair to state, in this connection, that the first private secretary employed by the present head of the Department of Agriculture was furnished him by a political friend and that after a short service that private secretary resigned the position, which remained vacant for more than a year, when the present incumbent, Mr. John Nordhouse, of Chicago, Ill., an expert stenographer and typewriter, was selected from the classified service. His appointment was made because of his merit and fidelity as a stenographer and typewriter to the Secretary, during a service of nearly two years, in which he had proved his worth, industry, discretion and efficiency.

Reviewing the last four years, we find the status of the classified service in the Department of Agriculture as follows:

March 4, 1893, there were two thousand four hundred and ninety-seven (2,497) men and women upon the pay rolls of the Department. But on November 1, 1896, there were only two thousand two hundred and seventeen (2,217) on the rolls; that is—notwithstanding an increased amount of work—there

had been a reduction in the force of two hundred and eighty (280).

In the classified service, March 4, 1893, there were 698. Of that number there were excepted from competitive examination 80, subject to non-competitive examination 12, total 92; leaving subject to competitive examination 606.

On November 1, 1896, there were in the classified service 1,658, excepted from competitive examination 1, leaving subject to competitive examination 1,657. Thus an increase of 1,051 persons subject to competitive examination has been made between March 4, 1893, and November 1, 1896.

The remaining 556 persons on the rolls of the Department, on the latter date, were laborers, workmen, charwomen, and others in a subordinate grade, not more than 40 of whom were employed in Washington, D. C. A great proportion of these 556 are rainfall and river observers in the Weather Bureau, at salaries ranging from \$3 to \$25 per month, and their employment is intermittent. Every person ranking as a skilled laborer or skilled workman is classified.

A classified service is disciplined merit. Disciplined merit renders a steady and efficient service, and steady and efficient service is economy.

Good government is the chief conservator of the welfare of all legitimate business and gainful undertakings. It must, therefore, if it is to be made better and perpetuated, be itself administered in harmony with business principles and methods. Just government is economical—not wasteful; frugal, and not extravagant. An ounce of economy in executive affairs is worth more than a pound of revenue. More economy, through a judiciously organized and efficiently directed departmental service, will bestow upon this Government and American citizenship far greater benefits than more revenue.

By the aid of a completely classified service to which there is no ingress, save through competitive examinations by the United States Civil Service Commission, the Department of Agriculture—the smallest and youngest of the Executive Departments—has demonstrated the truth that the Civil Service law, regulations and rules, vigorously carried out, are the best forces for economy yet tested in this form of Government. In four years' trial of the merit system more than two millions of dollars have been saved to cover back into the Treasury

out of appropriations made during that period for that Department. And as employees become more skillful, more expert and adept from experience in the service, the labor-cost of administration will continue to decline. My successor will find a fairly well equipped and decently disciplined force at his command, and the members of that force from the highest to the lowest will, as a rule, prove their allegiance to their duties by constant and efficient industry. Thus it will be easy to continue, proportionately with the growth of the Department of Agriculture, a reduction of expenditures and an enhancement of the value of its work in behalf of that advanced and successful agriculture upon which all other callings depend for existence.

Sneeringly the practical politician denounces Civil Service Reform as an illusion of doctrinaires, theorists and schoolmen—a theory from Utopia. But what great movement for the elevation and improvement of humanity ever came from any other than a scholarly or thoughtful source? And can there be a more sincere tribute to the merit system in the public service than its vituperation by those who have no merit? Only those political pirates who by retrospection, introspection and prospection are convinced that with a firmly established merit system in the civil service of municipal, state and federal government their calling as plunderers of the public has been abolished, now openly denounce the reform. Therefore, it will win its way to greater victories for honesty, economy and efficiency, and its triumphs will be equally enjoyed by all good citizens upon whom rest the responsibilities and burdens of maintaining for this Republic a Government which “will *sell* to no man” and “will not *deny* to any man, either Justice or Right.”

1

# CONSTITUTION

OF THE

## National Civil-Service Reform League.

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I.

The name of this organization shall be the National Civil Service Reform League.

II.

The object of the National Civil Service Reform League shall be to promote the purposes and to facilitate the correspondence and the united action of the Civil Service Reform Associations.

III.

The League shall consist of all the Civil Service Reform Associations in the United States which signify their willingness to become members thereof. Any association hereafter expressing such willingness shall become a member of the League upon its being accepted as such by the League or the Executive Committee. Any member of any such association may be present at any meeting of the League and take part in the debates or discussions as the by-laws may provide.

IV.

At any meeting of the League, each association belonging to it shall be entitled to one vote upon every question coming before the League; such vote may be cast by a personal representative designated by each association, or by proxy, as the by-laws may provide. If no such designation be made the delegates from such association present at such meeting, or a majority of them, may cast the vote of such association.

## V.

The officers of the League shall be a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and nine Vice-Presidents; and there shall be a General Committee and an Executive Committee. The officers and the committees shall hold office until their successors are appointed or elected.

## VI.

The President and Vice-Presidents shall be elected by ballot at the annual meeting of the League.

The Secretary and Treasurer shall be chosen, and may be removed, by the General Committee.

The General Committee shall be chosen annually, and shall consist of one delegate from each association belonging to the League; and one additional delegate for every two hundred members, or major fraction thereof, of such association as certified by its secretary. Each association shall elect its own delegates in such manner as it may determine.

The members of the Executive Committee shall be ex-officio members of the General Committee.

Any member of the General Committee may act by proxy.

The General Committee shall keep a record of its proceedings, and shall make a report to the League at the annual meeting. A vacancy in any office, except that of Vice-President, may be filled by the General Committee for the remainder of the term.

The General Committee may delegate to the Executive Committee any of its powers; provided, however, that it may at any time resume the powers so delegated.

The Executive Committee shall consist of twenty-one members to be elected annually by the General Committee and shall have power to fix its own quorum. And any member of the Executive Committee may act by proxy.

## VII.

The General Committee may, subject to these articles, manage the affairs of the League, direct and dispose of the

[REDACTED]

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## VII.

The General Committee may, subject to these articles, manage the affairs of the League, direct and dispose of the



funds, and may, from time to time, make and modify by-laws for the League and for its own action.

No debt shall be contracted, nor shall any appropriation of money be made, by the League or by the General Committee, beyond the amount in the hands of the Treasurer.

### VIII.

There shall be an annual meeting of the League at such time in each year, and at such place as the General Committee may determine, at which officers shall be elected for the ensuing year, and other appropriate business may be transacted.

A meeting of the League may be called at the discretion of the General Committee whenever any association belonging to it notifies the Secretary of the League of its desire to have such a meeting, and the President may at any time call a meeting of the League.

### IX.

Any provision of this Constitution may be suspended or amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any meeting of the General Committee, due notice of such proposed suspension or amendment having been given at a previous meeting. Any association belonging to the League may, through its representatives, propose amendments to the Constitution which may be approved under the same conditions.

PROCEEDINGS

81587

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF

THE NATIONAL CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE

HELD AT

CINCINNATI, OHIO, DEC. 16 AND 17, 1897.

WITH THE ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT,

AND OTHER MATTERS.

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NEW YORK:  
PUBLISHED FOR THE  
NATIONAL CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE.  
1897.

PRESS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT

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**ANNUAL MEETING**  
**OF THE**  
**NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE.**

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**DECEMBER 16, AND 17, 1897.**

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**P**URSUANT to call duly issued, the seventeenth annual meeting of the National Civil Service Reform League was held at Cincinnati, O., on the 16th and 17th of December, 1897. Among the delegates in attendance during the several sessions were the following:

**BALTIMORE:** Charles J. Bonaparte.

**BOSTON:** Charles Warren, Samuel Y. Nash.

**BUFFALO:** Sherman S. Rogers, Henry A. Richmond.

**CAMBRIDGE:** Morrill Wyman, Jr.

**CHICAGO:** John W. Ela, Edwin Burritt Smith, Ralph M. Easley, Adolph Nathan, John A. Roach, W. K. Ackerman.

**CINCINNATI:** Nathaniel Henschman Davis, John W. Warrington, Leopold Kleybolte, Rufus B. Smith, Herman Goepper, C. B. Wilby, Max B. May, L. C. Black, Henry C. Urner, William C. Herron, Larz Anderson, J. G. Schmidlapp.

**CLEVELAND:** William E. Cushing, James R. Garfield.

**DAYTON:** Lewis B. Gunckel, L. H. Patterson.

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:** John Joy Edson, Frederick L. Siddons, Adolf G. Wolff, A. J. Glassie.

**FORT WAYNE, IND.:** Henry N. Williams.

**INDIANAPOLIS:** Lucius B. Swift, Noble C. Butler, Frederick W. Dewhurst, J. H. Halliday.

**INDIANA UNIVERSITY:** Samuel B. Harding.

**NEW YORK:** Carl Schurz, George McAneny.

**PHILADELPHIA:** Herbert Welsh, Clinton Rogers Woodruff.

RICHMOND, IND.: William Dudley Foulke, Jesse Reeves, Stanley C. Hughes.

ST. LOUIS: Henry Hitchcock, A. L. Berry, A. R. Verdier.

ST. PAUL: Rev. W. R. Lord.

In response to invitations issued by the League to Municipal Reform Associations, and other bodies having the reform of the civil service among their objects, delegates were present from a number of such organizations, as follows:

ANN ARBOR:—*University of Michigan Good Government Club*: F. V. Byam.

BOSTON:—*Massachusetts Reform Club*: Charles Warren, Samuel Y. Nash.

CHICAGO:—*Municipal Voters' League*: Edward Burritt Smith.

CHICAGO:—*Civic Federation*:—Adolph Nathan, R. M. Easley.

CLEVELAND:—*Chamber of Commerce*: William E. Cushing.

LOUISVILLE:—*Good City Government Club*: F. N. Hartwell, Lafon Allen.

PITTSBURG:—*Citizen's Civic League*: Edward D. Frohman.

ST. LOUIS:—*Civic Federation*: A. L. Berry, Henry Hitchcock, A. R. Verdier.

VINELAND, N. J.:—*Citizens' Committee*: R. B. Moore.

WASHINGTON:—*Board of Trade*: John Joy Edson.

The morning session of the 16th, commencing at 10.30 o'clock, was occupied by a joint meeting of the General and Executive Committees, held at the Burnet House.

At 2.30 o'clock in the afternoon an open meeting of the League was held at the College Hall.\*

The annual address of the President, Hon. Carl Schurz, was delivered at the Odeon at 8 o'clock on the evening of the 16th. It is as follows:

# THE DEMOCRACY OF THE MERIT SYSTEM.

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*An Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the National Civil Service Reform League, at Cincinnati, Ohio, December 16, 1897.*

---

BY CARL SCHURZ.

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AT our last annual meeting I had occasion to congratulate the country upon the extraordinary advance the cause of civil service reform had made during the preceding year. President Cleveland's executive order of May 6, 1896, had not only added many thousands of positions to the classified service, but it had also established the general principle that it is the normal condition of public servants under the executive departments of the national government to be under the civil service rules, and that they should be considered and treated as being there, unless excepted by special regulation—a gain of incalculable consequence. I was also able to report signal progress of the reform in various States and in the municipal service of various cities. At the same time I expressed the apprehension that the advocates of the spoils system would not cease their hostile efforts and that, although the final result could not be doubtful, we might still have a period of arduous struggle before us. This apprehension has proved to be well founded.

The American people have hardly ever beheld a rush for the spoils of office more tumultuous than that which followed President McKinley's accession to power. Nor have we ever heard a more furious, and, I may add, a more disgraceful clamor from party men for the breach of party faith than that of Republican politicians demanding the repeal, or at least the disembowelment, of the civil service law by a President and a majority in Congress solemnly pledged to its maintenance and extension.

Recall to your memory some of the almost incredible scenes we have had to witness. The Republican national



convention in St. Louis had put these words in its platform: "The civil service law was placed on the Statute book by the Republican party, which has always sustained it, and we renew our repeated declaration that it shall be thoroughly and honestly enforced, and extended wherever practicable." When the Republican national convention adopted that pledge, President Cleveland's executive order of May 6th had been in operation for several weeks. It had not gone into force unobserved. The friends of good government had praised it, the spoilsmen of both parties, Republicans and Democrats, had denounced it. It was thus with full knowledge of its being an integral part of the civil service system then existing, that the Republican party in national convention assembled made its pledge. Neither could anybody pretend that it was a mere haphazard promise made inadvertently; for one national Republican platform after another had repeated the same declaration for many years. Nor could there be any doubt as to the meaning of the pledge. Nothing could be plainer. It was to enforce, honestly and thoroughly, the civil service law wherever it was then in operation, and to extend, wherever practicable, the operation of the law beyond the limits within which it operated at the time when the pledge was made. And then Mr. McKinley, the Republican candidate for the presidency, made the pledge of the party his own in the letter of acceptance by which he asked for the votes of the people. He accused the opposition party of "decrying this reform"; of being willing "to abandon all the advantages gained after so many years of agitation and effort"; of "encouraging a return to methods of party favoritism which both parties have denounced, which experience has condemned, and which the people have repeatedly disapproved"; and he assured the country that "the Republican party earnestly opposes this reactionary and entirely unjustifiable policy"; and that "it will take no backward step upon this question, but will seek to improve but never degrade the public service." And when introduced in his office as President, Mr. McKinley reiterated the vow in his inaugural address.

If there ever was a party pledge clear, unequivocal, and specific—if there ever was one sanctioned as a definite party policy by constant reiteration, it was this. And yet no sooner

was Mr. McKinley seated in the executive chair than a countless swarm of Republican spoils seekers swept down upon him, struggling to force the barrier of the classified service. Had that swarm consisted only of—pardon the vulgarity—the “deadbeats” hanging around the Republican camp as they hang around every other, or of members of Congress driven to mad despair by the pitiless persecution of hungry supporters insisting upon their reward, the spectacle might have been regarded as a mere after-play of the old barbarism which has brought so much humiliation and shame to our patriotic pride, but is gradually to pass away. But of more sinister portent was it when President McKinley was waited upon by a delegation pretending to come from the “League of Republican Clubs” in whose name they demanded that the President should forthwith rescind the executive order by which his predecessor had enlarged the scope of the civil service law, and that he should thus open again the places covered by that order to appointment by favor, that is, to the invasion of spoils politics.

It is worth while to contemplate that scene. There stood the President of this great republic with the solemn vow honestly and thoroughly to enforce the civil service law and, wherever practicable, to extend it—with that vow still warm on his lips; and, facing him a group of persons pretending to represent a great organization “embracing the young and active men of the party,” coolly insisting that this President should by one of his first official acts break and dishonor his party’s and his own pledge and thus before the American people and all the world declare his party to be a cheat and himself a dishonest man. Did it not occur to those persons that in approaching the President with such a request and in professing to think him capable of so disgraceful an act, they offered him just as deadly an insult as if they had asked him to forge a bank check or to embezzle a trust fund, with the expectation that he would do it? Did not one of them feel that after so outrageous an affront the President would have been justified in treating them as persons not to be recognized as gentlemen, and as base slanderers in falsely pretending to represent the young men of the Republican party? Could they forget that if it really were true that the young men of the Republican party can be inspired to strenuous effort only by the prospect

of spoil, and that to obtain that spoil they would have their party dishonor itself by breaking a time honored vow, and by repudiating its faith, the moral vitality of that party would soon be gone? It was indeed a repulsive exhibition of the effect which the spoil system has exercised upon the moral sense of men, and the young men of the Republican party cannot too soon repel the calumnious imputation cast upon them by their pretended representatives.

I know the excuse that is given for this amazing demand. It is that President Cleveland's administration had filled a great many positions which were not in the classified service, with Democrats, and then covered them with the civil service rules in order to protect the new incumbents against removal. The civil service reformers have not been sparing in criticism and remonstrance when under the Cleveland administration removals or appointments were made which appeared improper. But I do not hesitate to say that the objection to Mr. Cleveland's great executive order made by the Republican spoils politicians is utterly futile. That order did not protect any public servant covered by it against removal—proof of which is the simple fact that a considerable number of them actually have been removed. The effect of the order simply was that, if any of those places were vacated they could not be arbitrarily filled by way of political or personal favor with incompetent or otherwise unsuitable persons; for the order subjected candidates for such places to competitive examinations. And this is the thing that troubles the Republican politicians of the spoils persuasion. Their souls are in patriotic agony not because some Democratic party hacks were kept in their places by the civil service rules, which they were not, but because those places can not be filled at pleasure with Republican party hacks. Not in order to improve the honesty and efficiency of the service, but to turn over those offices as plunder to their own men they insist that their party shall repudiate its pledge and the President shall dishonor himself by breaking his word.

Besides, there has never been any advance of civil service reform that did not call forth the same flimsy charge. The civil service law was enacted in 1883 when the whole service with very few exceptions, was filled with Republicans. By direction of Congress and with the approval of President

Arthur about 14,000 places were classified. It might have been charged by the Democrats, in accordance with the argument used against Mr. Cleveland's order, that President Arthur protected about 14,000 Republican placemen in their positions. Under President Cleveland during his first term about 6,500 places were added to the classified list. A similar charge might have been brought by the Republicans. Under President Harrison's administration, including the growth of the service, the executive extensions, the railway mail clerks, and the navy yard employees classified by Secretary Tracy, about 26,000 were added; and in this case the Democrats brought the same charge with more color of justice, as the execution of the order extending the civil service rules over the railway mail service was stayed for several weeks, giving the Postmaster-General time to stock that branch of the service thoroughly with Republicans before the rules were permitted to take force. About 2,500 vacancies were created by removals, and corresponding appointments of railway mail clerks were made in a hurry. And I may add that when during the Democratic administration following an attempt was made to re-open by law to the persons thus removed the way to their former positions without examination, that attempt was sternly resisted by this league for the reason that, if successful, it would have served as a precedent for further unsettling and demoralizing movements in the future. Then came President Cleveland's second administration when by several successive executive orders and through natural growth over 39,000 places were added, more than 11,000 of which, however, had already been subject to the examination system under separate departmental orders, or were field employees of the war department.

This is sufficient to show that if there were any ground for the charge concerning the alleged protection of appointees by extensions of the civil service rules, that charge would apply to both parties alike. But during the operation of the civil service law there has been no ground for such a charge, for the simple reason that really no operative limitation of executive discretion as to removals existed. It was not until the appearance of Mr. McKinley's recent order that any effective limitation was put in force.

Every self-respecting American will prefer to assume, that

the Presidents who ordered those extensions; did so from patriotic motives. But even if partizan considerations had at times intruded into their action, the practical result would, after all, have been only the enlargement of a system which ministers to the public interest without in the end giving either party any advantage at all. Nor should the Republican spoilsmen forget that, had not President Cleveland made the extensions they complain of, President McKinley would have been in honor and duty bound to make them himself—for according to the pledge of the Republican party and his own, he has not only to enforce the civil service law honestly and thoroughly, but to extend it *whenever* practicable. And that these extensions have been practicable, is proved by the fact of their successful operation. He will soon have to go beyond them, according to the Republican platform, wherever further practicability appears.

True to his honor as a gentleman, to his vows as a Republican, and to his duty as President of the United States, Mr. McKinley stoutly held his ground against the fierce foray which was set on foot to overwhelm him. It may be said that to resist pressure, especially pressure from party friends aiming at a wrongful object, is the first and most obvious duty of the head of the State, and that its simple performance does not call for extraordinary praise. But when faithfully performed against unusual urgency, as it was in this instance, it deserves a tribute of gratitude, and this tribute should be heartily paid to President McKinley by every true friend of good government.

The first onset has been repulsed, but the fight is not finished. The clamor of the place-seekers still resounds with lusty vociferation. In three Republican State conventions resolutions have been adopted hostile to the merit system. An association has been organized to agitate for the repeal of the civil service law, and Republican members of the Senate of the United States and of the House of Representatives are loudly threatening to bring the matter to an issue at the present session of Congress. Two of them, Representative Grosvenor of Ohio, and Senator Gallinger of New Hampshire, have already been designated by one of the spoilsmen's organs as the anti-civil service reform candidates for the presidency and the vice-presidency. It seems that the rapid progress of the

merit system had put its enemies into a desperate state of mind and that, seeing their case in deadly peril, they have resolved to rally their whole force for a final effort. The hour has come for them to do or die.

The weapons employed by the champions of this reactionary movement are characteristic of their object. Whoever has attempted to argue the subject of civil service reform with one of its opponents, will have gathered this experience: You ask him whether it is not true that the public service was originally intended, not for the benefit of this or that political party, nor of influential politicians, nor of the public servants themselves, but solely for the accommodation and benefit of the people, and he will have to admit it.—You ask him, whether the people are not clearly entitled to the best—that is, the most honest and efficient service attainable, and he will have to admit that too.—You ask him whether, in order to secure to the people the best attainable service, it is not most reasonable to select public servants with a sole view to their fitness for the work to be done, and to ascertain that fitness by the best available method, and he will admit that also, in theory at least, although with some reluctance.—But when you ask him whether the fitness of a candidate—say, for a clerkship—cannot be better ascertained by examining him as to handwriting, orthography, ciphering, abstract making, tabulating, simple composition, and the like, and by obliging him to exhibit testimonials from some reputable citizens as to his moral character, than by inquiring whether he can claim reward for having served the party by drumming up voters, or by having helped to pack or run a caucus, or by money contributions coming either from himself or his relatives or friends,—and when you ask further, whether the best attainable service cannot most surely be secured by giving every one who considers himself fit for such public employment an opportunity for proving his fitness by assembling the candidates together in a competitive examination or test, which will be apt to point out those best fitted, the best man to have the best chance for appointment—when you ask him these questions,—questions which would be answered by every disinterested citizen of ordinary common sense with a hearty, “Yes, of course,”—then the brow of your champion of the spoils system becomes clouded with an angry gloom, and he tells you

with fierce emphasis, that those are outlandish notions, utterly un-American, British, Chinese, or what not, and that you are an impracticable theorist, a visionary, a dude, a pharisee, a "holier-than-thou" man—in short a mugwump, who has no business to interfere with practical politics at all.

You try to appease him by showing him your willingness to hear what *he* has to say, and give him the floor. He tells you that in a free country there must be political parties and that, without them, the government cannot be carried on. This you do not deny.—He goes on telling you, that without the distribution of patronage in the shape of offices among its workers, a political party cannot exist. You answer him by pointing out the fact, that political parties do exist without patronage in ever so many foreign countries, and that they did exist in this country without the use of offices or patronage before the spoils system was introduced, and that they were then as full of life and energy as ever since.—He excitedly asks you whether you really think that a party can win without patronage, and whether the popular interest in politics can be kept up without holding out to the people the prospect of a large distribution of offices if their party wins. You answer by reminding him of our own experience that in the last four presidential elections that party which possessed the patronage was regularly beaten ; that therefore the patronage has certainly not proved an element of strength sufficient to save a party from defeat ; that it is rather an element of weakness in creating disappointments and animosities, and in making, by its inevitable abuses, the party possessing it odious to public spirited citizens. And as to the necessity of the patronage for keeping up the popular interest in politics, you turn upon him with this question: Is it not a foul slander upon our national character to say, that, while in England, Germany, Italy, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Norway, the popular interest in public affairs does not need the stimulus of office plunder, the American people have become such a lot of mercenary wretches, that only the promise of reward, the prospect of official salaries will inspire them to maintain political parties, and keep them alive to the honor and the welfare of this great republic?—This staggers our spoilsman somewhat but he does not give up. He asks whether it is not true after all that many of the busiest workers in party organizations depend upon

office as a reward of their activity and that without the stimulus furnished by patronage, their useful zeal would be wanting. You answer that this may be so, but that the zeal which needs the stimulus of patronage is after all a mercenary zeal; that the mercenary element in political parties will grow the more powerful, the more it is stimulated by spoil; that the moral spirit and tone of a party organization will sink the lower, the more powerful the mercenary element in politics grows; that the pushing intrusion of that mercenary element will naturally serve to drive persons of self respect and high ideals from public life; that the patriot for revenue only is the bane of our politics and can best be spared; that if he drops out, he will only make room for a better class of men; that the spoils system has enabled persons whose statesmanship consists in distributing patronage, and hardly in anything else, to maintain themselves in public life, and to organize the so-called machine consisting of patronage mongers and place hunters; that the machine tends to make political parties wholly subservient to selfish ends, to crowd out that statesmanship which is inspired wholly by high patriotism, and to turn our political contests into sordid squabbles about personal advancement and public plunder.

In saying this you have touched a sore point; for the statesman you address is likely to be himself one of those public men whose statesmanship consists mainly in the handling of the patronage and who would be in danger of speedy extinction, were that resource of political sustenance taken from him. It is a delicate matter for him to discuss, and he therefore changes his tack and begins to impeach the efficiency of the merit system itself. He will tell you of absurd questions being asked in the examinations—how a candidate for a letter carrier's place had to give the exact number of the killed in the battle of Marathon, or a candidate for a clerkship the distance of the moon from the planet Mars, and so on. Your answer is that these ridiculous stories are simply not true—mere inventions of the enemy—and that, if the examinations have in any cases not been sufficiently practical, the obvious remedy is, not to abolish the whole merit system but to instruct the examiners to make the examination more pertinent.—He will tell you that under the civil service law only college graduates have a chance and that the whole system is,



therefore, aristocratic. You confute him by authoritative statistics proving that in Massachusetts there were during the last eight years among 9323 successful candidates only 157 college men, and that even in the federal service the college graduates form less than 10 per cent. of the successful candidates, and in those branches of the service which require no scientific education, only 6 per cent.—He will tell you that under the merit system a life tenure of office prevails in the public service which is obnoxious to our institutions. Your answer is, that according to the fundamental principle of the merit system, the tenure of the public servant is determined by the efficiency with which he performs his duties, and that his tenure is therefore not a life-tenure, but a merit tenure ; and that merit tenure is the vital principle of a good service.—Your spoilsman further insists that a man at the head of a public office knows best what kind of men he wants to do the work under him, and that it is therefore most reasonable to permit him full liberty in the choice of his help. You reply that this rule may hold good as to the conduct of private business where the head of an establishment enjoys real freedom in the selection of his clerks or agents ; but that according to universal experience, a public officer under the spoils system is not permitted that freedom ; that whenever he has any place to fill he is instantly set upon by party managers, or bosses, or other politicians of influence, who urge upon him their creatures or favorites ; that he is apt to be compelled by a fierce pressure to accept men as his subordinates whom his own judgment would have rejected ; that the so-called freedom of the head of an office to select his help really means nothing but the freedom of influential politicians to select that help for him and to keep such favorites in place not so long as *he* likes, but as long as *they* like ; that against such pressure he can find effective protection only in a law or rule making competitive examinations of candidates obligatory, thus excluding favoritism and influence ; that the more conscientious an officer is in his desire to serve the public good, the more heartily he welcomes such a law ; and that this is not mere theory or guess, but a stubborn fact to which every candid man who has had the experience of official life will unqualifiedly bear his testimony.

Being thus baffled at every point in detail, your antagonist

will again take refuge in general assertion and say that the public service is no better now than it was before the civil service law was enacted, and that the boasted merit system is therefore a practical failure.—To this daring allegation—daring I call it, for he who alleges this will have the courage to allege anything—you are able to oppose the crushing fact that since the enactment of the civil service law every President, whether Republican or Democrat, has in his official utterances borne the most ample testimony to the signal benefit the merit system has conferred upon the service in efficiency as well as in moral tone; that one Secretary after another, without distinction of party, has pronounced the merit system the only method by which the business of their departments could be carried on in an honest and proper manner; that ever so many executive officers who entered upon their duties with a prejudice against the merit system, have become ardent converts to it after some practical experience; and that, as the undisputed statistics of the service incontestably prove, wherever the merit system prevailed, more work was done by a smaller force and for less money than before, while, where it did not prevail, the old wastefulness in the multiplication of offices and salaries for little and frequently poor work continued; and that he who disputes this, might as well dispute the multiplication table.

And what has your spoils politician still to say after this? He then thinks it expedient to let others speak for him and brings on his witnesses. Here is the sorely aggrieved patriot who has been accustomed to be taken care of by influential politicians, who finds himself debarred from the public crib by the merit system, and who insists that a boss, or a party committee, or a member of Congress is a better judge of a man's fitness for office than an examining board. Here is the unfortunate who has failed in his examination and thus concludes that the whole system of examination is a cranky contrivance. Here is the man who knows of a case in which the spirit of the merit system has not been honestly enforced, and who therefore denounces civil service reform as a delusion and a snare. Here is the appointing officer who thinks that any restriction of his power to grant favors is an insult to his dignity, or who occasionally cannot get "the man he wants," and who therefore concludes that

the whole system is utterly impracticable. And so on. But when the investigation is carried further, and the overwhelming preponderance of the testimony sustains the practical as well as moral excellence of the system, your spoils politician falls back upon his last resource which is indeed inexhaustible—his power of imaginative invention. It is not too much to say that "the lie well stuck to" has become a favorite weapon with the ordinary stripe of the enemies of civil service reform; and this weapon is employed with the loftiest confidence in the assumed ignorance or gullibility of the public, and the most reckless disregard of consequences as to the character for truth and veracity of the person using it.

During the long period that I have been an attentive observer of public affairs, I have witnessed many heroic dealings with the truth. But I have seldom seen men of prominent position commit themselves to statements which everybody in the slightest degree conversant with the subject knew to be untrue, with such wild imprudence as some of them do in their struggle against civil service reform. It is almost incredible, but literally true, for instance, that Senator Gallinger, of New Hampshire, with whom I have had some public correspondence, would, among other equally astounding things, stubbornly insist upon it, that under the civil service rules every candidate for the position of compositor or printer in the Public Printing office was required to hop a certain distance on one foot, as part of his examination; that all official inquiries had proved the civil service system a dead failure, and that President Cleveland had issued his order of May 6th, 1896, making large additions to the classified service, only after he had been informed of the Republican victory of the Presidential election, which took place on November 2, 1897. No wonder the organ of the spoils politicians put that Senator forth as their candidate for the vice-presidency.

Nor is it easy to believe that a member of the House of Representatives, hailing from this State, too—the Hon. C. H. Grosvenor, should, at the last session of Congress have made a speech against civil service reform which contained scores of statements of fact flagrantly untrue or misleading. Of their quality you may judge from this representative specimen: He positively asserts that the civil service law "was never intended to cover anything but the departments in Washing-

ton, and that alone in its application to the clerical force," while at the very time when the law was enacted, the competitive system was in actual operation in the Custom House and the Post office in New York, and while the law itself provided in terms that the merit system prescribed by it should be introduced throughout the country in every post office and custom house having 50 employees, and that the President and the several department chiefs should from time to time revise the classification so as to include places theretofore not classified, excluding only from the scope of such extensions offices not in the executive branch, offices to be filled by the President with the consent of the Senate, and common laborers. No wonder Mr. Grosvenor was nominated by the organ of the spoils politicians as their candidate for the presidency.

While thus almost all the objections to the merit system brought forward by its enemies are easily and conclusively refuted either by the public record or by the simplest reasoning, there is one which has a certain plausibility for those who form their judgment upon superficial impressions. It is, that, one American citizen having as much right to public employment as another, a system making appointments dependent upon the result of examinations removes public offices from the reach of the people and confines them to a privileged class, which will bring forth an officeholding aristocracy. The idea of a great American aristocracy consisting of Treasury clerks, or letter carriers, or customs inspectors, or even of such magnates as revenue collectors or presidential postmasters, or Indian agents, must appear laughable not only to the people but to the employees themselves. But there are, indeed, many persons who think that appointment to office as a reward for party service, or upon the recommendation of an influential politician is more apt to give everybody a chance, and, therefore, more democratic than a system requiring a proof of fitness. What a preposterous idea! Subject the essential features of the spoils system to a simple analysis and compare them with those of the merit system, and you will find, as I argued before the Governor of New York last spring, and as recently the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Long, has forcibly set forth, that the merit system furnishes the only method of appointment that is really democratic—the only one that is truly just to the people.

Here is the ordinary course of things under the spoils system.

John Smith, a carpenter, or a bricklayer, who sustains himself and his family by industrious work and does his duty as a good citizen by voting according to his honest convictions, has a bright boy. That boy has received a good common school education and sharpened his intellect and increased his knowledge by personal effort in various ways. He is a young man too, of correct habits and excellent character. He wishes to enter the government service as a clerk. How must he go about it? The spoils system prevails. He finds that government clerks are appointed only upon the recommendation of somebody. He can easily obtain testimonials from a number of highly respectable persons who know him, but he is told that he will need the recommendation of some politician of influence, best of all that of the member of Congress—that, in fact, without the good will of the member of Congress nothing can be accomplished. He approaches the member from his district and exhibits the testimonials as to his ability and to his character. “Oh, that is all well enough,” says the honorable gentleman, “but to what party do you belong?” If poor young Smith happens not to belong to the party of the honorable member, there is, of course, the end of it at once. But let us suppose, he does. Then the great man continues the examination. “What claims have you?” he asks. “Claims?” replies young Smith—“why, here are my testimonials as to my ability and character, and I am willing to undergo any test to prove that I can well perform a clerk’s duty.” “Oh, hang all that,” exclaims the member of Congress, impatiently,—“what claims have you politically, you or your father? I have never heard of either of you during the campaign.” The young man is obliged to confess that they were too poor to contribute money to the campaign fund, and too busy with their daily work to do more in the election than cast their votes and occasionally discuss politics with their neighbors. The examination is finished. “Well,” says the great man languidly, “you may leave your papers here and I will consider them in time.” This ends the interview.

When young Smith passes out of the great man’s door, two other persons pass in—Mr. Brown, a wealthy manufacturer with hundreds of operatives in his employ, and his nephew, young Mr. Green, a youth of questionable parts and uncertain character. Mr. Brown is tired of taking care of this

unthrifty poor relative and finds it most convenient to unload him upon the government. The member of Congress receives the two most cordially, and asks what he can do for them. "I want a government clerkship for my nephew," says Mr. Brown. "You know what I did for you in the campaign—my contribution to the war chest and the votes of all my people.—" "Of course," interrupts the member of Congress, "I know what recognition I and the party owe you. Your nephew seems to be a splendid fellow, too!" "Well," says Mr. Brown, "as to that, I don't think he knows much, but he may learn." "Never mind that," says the member of Congress, smilingly, "that will be all right. Send him on to Washington." In Washington he takes young Mr. Green to one of the Departments. "I must have a clerkship for this young man," he says to the Secretary, "and a good one, too. He is the nephew of one of my most powerful constituents whom I am bound to oblige." The Secretary sees the necessity.

There are pass examinations held in the department—that is to say, examinations conducted by the appointing power itself, to which only candidates with influential recommendations behind them are admitted, not seriously to compete with each other, but, at best, to show that they are not absolute dunces or idiots. These examinations are a mere hollow form, as influence rules it all. The member of Congress asks that they be made easy to young Mr. Green. He receives a knowing wink in reply, and the thing is made easy. Mr. Green is asked to add up two and two and to give the name of the capital city of the Union—questions which were once actually asked within my knowledge. Mr. Green issues triumphantly from the ordeal.

But there is no vacancy. What of it? A vacancy must be made. It is found that some clerk in the Department has "lost his influence," that is, the member of Congress on whose recommendation he was appointed has died or dropped out of politics. The clerk is indeed very meritorious and valuable, but having lost his influence, and no new influence turning up, he is removed to make room for young Green. Young Green soon shows a fondness for strong drink and neglect of duty, and he is threatened with dismissal. He complains to his member of Congress who rushes at once to the Secretary,

exclaiming: "If you dismiss young Green, it will offend Mr. Brown, my most powerful constituent, and my district may be lost. I must insist that Mr. Green be kept." Young Green is kept in the service, and his duties are made light so that there is not much to neglect. In the meantime young Smith is still waiting for a favorable consideration of his testimonials, which, of course, never comes.

This is no caricature. Not that in every instance, or in a majority of cases the favored individual was a scapegrace or a dunce—for it is true, able and decent men got into public employment that way. Not that every drunkard or drone was kept in the service by political intercession, for some were really turned out. It is also true that there have been conscientious Congressmen who would not recommend unworthy persons. But the story I have told was rendered not only possible by the spoils system, but it has actually so happened hundreds of times. While there was indeed much variety as to the qualifications of the persons appointed, one rule was universal—without influence no appointment; without influence no security of tenure of office.

Now mark the course of proceedings under the merit system. Here is young Smith, the bright son of the carpenter again, wishing to obtain a clerkship in a government Department. He finds an announcement in the papers that at a certain time and place a competitive examination will be held to test the qualifications of candidates for appointment. He finds that admission to that competitive examination is open to him. He has only to satisfy certain requirements as to age, health, and a certificate of good character, to be signed by two reputable citizens. No questions are asked as to his politics, or his creed, or his origin. No claims based upon party service, no recommendations by influential politicians are called for. The examination is held, and the carpenter's son meets there young Green, the nephew and protégé of Mr. Brown, the rich manufacturer who had made a heavy contribution to the campaign chest and has power enough to command ever so many votes. The examination being competitive the candidates examined are graded according to the degree of their success in answering the tests of merit and fitness proposed to them, those who are most successful to have the best title to appointment. Now, suppose young Smith, the carpenter's son, ap-

appears at the head of the list, and young Green, the rich manufacturer's nephew and protégé, far behind. The carpenter's son, without political claims, without influence, will get the clerkship, while the young man with all the power of wealth and political pull at his back will have to look to his rich uncle or to honest work outside of the government service for support. Young Smith will first receive a probationary appointment for, say, six months, to prove his practical capacity and adaptation to the work he is to do. If that probation is successfully passed, his appointment is made definitive, and then his tenure of the office will not depend upon the influence or power of anybody ever so powerful, but entirely upon his own merit. He will hold his place with undisturbed self-respect so long as he performs his duties efficiently and faithfully and maintains a character befitting a public servant.

This is the merit system in its purity. It is true, the civil service rules provide that the appointing power shall not be bound to appoint the one highest on the list, but to have his choice among the highest three—thus being permitted some discretion where the difference of merit may be trifling. But, as a rule, the first of the three gets the place. It is also true that unscrupulous appointing officers sometimes try, by circumventing the spirit of the system, to give an advantage to political favorites, or that removals in the classified service have sometimes been made for political reasons. But such transgressions are strictly forbidden and punishable by dismissal. Thus it may truly be said, that while in the administration of the civil service law influence and favoritism may creep in, they can creep in only through fraud or violation of duty, and that the system opens as a rule to every citizen, rich or poor, without distinction of party or creed or social station, the road to public employment through the gates of simple merit.

Now I ask any unprejudiced and candid man, which of the two systems is most apt, not only to give the republic an honest and efficient service, but to put public employment most impartially within the reach of everybody? Which of the two is the most democratic? On the one hand we behold the group of political magnates, the bosses, the Senators and the Representatives, the party leaders—the dukes, the earls, and the barons of politics—doling out by way of favor their recommendations, which are usually equivalent to appointments,



among the applicants for office who appear as petitioners before them, the favored petitioner to feel himself under constant obligation to the political magnate to whom he owes his place, knowing that he will be secure in his place only so long as that favor continues. Is not this a political aristocracy with something like a feudal retinue in full bloom?

On the other hand we behold the American citizen, the freeman, no matter whether rich or poor, whether backed by the influence of the powerful or not, independent of the favor of anybody, claiming and obtaining the right to compete for public employment upon equal terms with other freemen, the poorest with the richest, the lowliest with the most powerful, the best man to have the best chance. Is not this the equality of opportunity which forms the very life element of true democracy? On the one side the aristocracy of influence which grants or withholds as a favor what merit may claim as its right. On the other hand the democracy of equal opportunity which recognizes in all citizens alike the right of merit by giving the best man the best chance.

It is a significant fact that in England, so long as the government was essentially aristocratic, the spoils system flourished—that is to say, public employment was bestowed by the favor of the powerful. But as the government became more and more democratic, the merit system took the place of favoritism and public employment was thrown open to free and public competition.

I say, therefore, that in contending for the merit system we contend for the right of the people to the offices instituted for their benefit. Whoever opposes it, fights against true democracy. Nothing is more ridiculous than the manner in which the spoils politicians seek to obscure this feature of the question. They carry the word “people” constantly at their tongues’ end and mean only those for whom *they* want public places and salaries. Mr. Grosvenor loudly protests that the men who “in 1896 marched thousands and thousands of miles to hear the words of encouragement and instruction from the President as he stood upon the steps of his home in Canton” shall not be excluded from places in the department by troublesome civil service tests. He will admit that, there being untold thousands of them, they cannot all have offices, unless we create an office with a salary for every appli-

cant of that kind. Who, then, is to select from among the untold thousands of patriotic wanderers those who are to be blessed with place and pay? Why, Mr. Grosvenor tells us that the members of Congress are the fittest men to make that selection, and of those members of Congress Mr. Grosvenor is one. Their "people," therefore, are those whom this aristocracy of influence find it convenient to favor.

Does not Mr. Grosvenor think that President McKinley, to whom those thousands came to listen, had a much more correct conception of what is really due to the people, when in his letter of acceptance he sternly rebuked those who "encourage a return to methods of favoritism which both parties have denounced, which experience has condemned, and which the people have repeatedly disapproved?" Is he not much more just to the confidence of the people who made him President, and more conscientiously mindful of the people's rights when he firmly tells the clamorers for the "return to methods of favoritism" that, faithful to his recorded vow, he will to the utmost of his power protect the people in the enjoyment of the right freely to compete on equal terms for public employment?

I repeat, it is the aristocracy of influence on one side and the democracy of merit on the other. And I cannot too strongly impress upon the mind of everyone concerned that every public employment unnecessarily withdrawn from the domain of the democracy of merit and turned over to the aristocratic rule of influence is an encroachment on popular rights. There is constant urgency on the part of so-called practical politicians, and sometimes also from executive officers who are exposed to political pressure, for the withdrawal of this or that class of positions which are now in the classified service, from the competitive rule. In hardly any case has my examination of the reasons for such a demand convinced me of the necessity of the withdrawal. In almost every instance we find the same or a similar class of offices elsewhere successfully administered under the competitive rule, and nothing can be more certain than that the withdrawals asked for would result simply in turning over the positions concerned to the abuses of patronage mongering and spoils politics. Those in power should never permit themselves to forget that when an office, the subjection of which to the competitive rule is at all practicable, is withheld from the domain

of that rule, or whenever an office already under the competitive rule is without the clearest necessity withdrawn from it and is thus made a matter of patronage commanded by influence, the people are robbed of their right of free competition for that public employment. That right cannot be too jealously guarded, especially by the men and women who are poor, or without influential backing, or too self-respecting to make themselves dependent upon the favor of the powerful instead of their own work, and who, when serving the public, will not make themselves anybody's political slaves. It is in the competitive rule alone that they find a guarantee of a fair and equal chance, and they have every reason to hold to stern account any man in power and any political party that is weak or wicked enough to participate or acquiesce in any attempt to subvert or only to curtail the right of the people to that equality of opportunity, that independence of influence and favoritism, which true democracy demands. And the efforts of certain politicians to repeal the civil service law or to restrict its operation, are clearly a war upon this right.

The first practical attack was made in New York where Governor Black sounded the keynote by proclaiming his desire to "take the starch out of civil service," whereupon the Legislature followed with a law making an artful distinction between "merit" and "fitness"—a distinction without a difference, never heard of before—and providing that each candidate for a place in the classified service shall have to pass two examinations,—one for "merit" to be conducted by the established civil-service boards, and the other for "fitness" to be conducted by the appointing officers themselves in such manner as they may see fit to adopt, oral or in writing, public or secret. Inasmuch as the value of such examinations is shown by experience to rest upon the independence of their management from the appointing power, it was safe to predict that the practical result of the operation of this law would be the virtual annihilation of the competitive system prescribed by the State Constitution of New York. And this has substantially been the case wherever the dual examination system was applied, while some public departments appointed the existing civil-service boards as their examiners, which in so far set a limit to the restoration of the spoils system. But the new law stands in such glaring

antagonism to the evident spirit and intent of the constitutional mandate that a test case which is soon to be carried before the courts, is most likely to bring forth a judicial decision declaring it unconstitutional. Meanwhile there has been an election in the State of New York, which proved quite intelligibly that the Republican party has, to say the least, not been strengthened by the attempted relapse into spoils politics. It is the old experience.

Of the efforts being made to rally the whole army of spoils politicians for a general assault upon the national civil-service law, I have already spoken. The first onset has been bravely beaten back by the President. Instead of breaking his word by rescinding all the extensions of the rules made by his predecessor, he issued an executive order on the 27th of July by which he exempted from the competitive rules certain classes of positions in the revenue service, extended the rule over a few others, and then directed that "no removal shall be made from any position subject to competitive examination except for just cause and upon written charges filed with the head of the department or other appointing officer, and of which the accused shall have full notice and an opportunity to make defence." Of the exceptions from the competitive rules made in the first part of the order, it may be said that after full consultation they were agreed upon between the Secretary of the Treasury and the Civil Service Commission, both being known to have the cause of civil-service reform seriously at heart. Candidates for the places thus excepted are subject to examinations to be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury, with the approval of the Civil Service Commission, which is also to conduct them. It is to be said, however, that if this arrangement succeeds in keeping the positions concerned out of reach of spoils politics, it will accomplish more than has usually been accomplished by mere pass examinations before. Nor is there any risk in predicting that further experience will prove not only the practicability, but also the desirability of returning those positions to the domain of the competitive rule.

But the clause of President McKinley's order which attracted the greatest attention is that concerning removals. It is no exaggeration to say that its appearance was greeted with a round of applause that resounded all over the country. The

best part of the public press was enthusiastic in its praise, and the hearty acclaim of all the true friends of good government in the land fairly drowned for a while the savage clamor for spoils which since the presidential election had filled the air. When he witnessed that spontaneous outburst of approbation, President McKinley cannot have failed to feel that he had the true public opinion of the country on his side, and that the motley crowd of spoils hunters pressing upon him to force dishonor on himself and his party, was only a small minority making up in noise for what it lacked in good sense as well as in numbers. What was it that called forth that loud and general applause? It was that the American people felt themselves after all the confusing rumors and speculations that had disquieted them, suddenly relieved of all uncertainty as to whether President McKinley would surely meet his own and his party's pledges. The American people like an honest man. They admire a man of courage in the right, who will stand firm as a rock against the pressure even of his friends when they demand what is wrong and dishonorable. And the people saw in President McKinley's order a vigorous manifestation of his patriotic purpose to make true his words: "Civil Service reform has come to stay."

Besides, the intelligence of the country recognized in the order concerning removals a decided progress of that reform. The time had come for this step and President McKinley responded to a wise public sentiment in taking it. Thoughtful citizens had long been disgusted at the reckless disregard of the public interest as well as of private justice with which meritorious public servants had been turned out of their places merely to make room for the favorites of influential politicians. It was, indeed, thought at first by civil service reformers that arbitrary removals would cease whenever the competitive system made arbitrary appointments impossible. As our lamented leader, George William Curtis, happily expressed it "if the front door is well guarded the back door will take care of itself." It was, therefore, believed best that the discretion of the chiefs of executive departments in the matter of removals should be left entirely unlimited. But this sanguine expectation did not stand the test of experience, and Mr. Curtis himself, toward the close of his life, was inclined to abandon it. The introduction of the competitive rule in certain branches

of the service did not at once produce the effect of wholly curing all appointing officers of the widely prevailing spoils disease.

It was found that those of them who were unscrupulous enough to care more for party politics than for the public interest, as well as others who had not courage enough to stand up against the pressure of political influence, would make arbitrary removals for the purpose of opening a chance for some trick by which, in spite of the competitive system, they might put the favorites of power into the vacated places,—and not seldom they succeeded, either by way of arbitrary promotions, or of emergency appointments, or by other devices. And it may be said that nothing has done more to shake the popular belief in the good faith of the merit system than such dishonest practices.

To such artful violations of the spirit of the civil service law President McKinley's order is intended to put a stop. It does not make a removal subject to a formal judicial proceeding. It does not limit the discretion of the executive officer to an extent prejudicial to the discipline of the service; but it does make the reason assigned for every removal as well as the answer thereto a matter of public record, and it will thus render the executive officer for every removal from a place under the competitive rule amenable to the judgment of public opinion as well as to the judgment and the corresponding action of his superiors. The new rule, if carried out with fidelity and firmness, will thus be well apt to rid the service of a very offensive and dangerous abuse, and President McKinley fully deserves all the praise he has received for this achievement.

To secure the enforcement of the order the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Gage, with commendable promptness issued excellent instructions to executive officers under the Treasury Department prescribing an appropriate mode of procedure, and containing the important injunction that reductions in grade and salary should be treated in all things like removals—this to put a stop to the tricky device followed by some unscrupulous executive officers, of forcing worthy public servants to resign by arbitrarily reducing them to a lower grade which they could not accept with self-respect—a practice most objectionable on account not only of its injustice, but also of its peculiarly sneaking character. This

action on the part of the Secretary of the Treasury was most praiseworthy, and it is greatly to be hoped that his instructions will be made a uniform rule for all the executive departments that have not yet adopted them.

Nothing would gratify me more than to be able to add that the President's order had already borne all the good fruit which it is expected to bear. But I regret to say that so far it has not. Many reports have come to us from Washington as well as from other parts of the country which represent executive officers as making or recommending removals or reductions without assigning any just cause, or any cause at all. There is no doubt that some of those reports will, upon careful examination, turn out to be unfounded, or at least exaggerated. But it must also be admitted that some of the cases that have come to our knowledge, bear an exceedingly ugly look and leave scarcely any doubt that the President's order has in those instances been treated with wanton defiance. It is hardly necessary to say that public officers doing this not only violate their official duty, but are basely disloyal to their chief; especially if they count upon the goodness of his heart to let their offence pass with impunity. For they must know that such leniency on his part would only serve to encourage further defiance and turn the praise he has received for issuing the order into scorn and reproach for permitting it to fall into contempt. It is confidently to be expected that the President, as such offences come to his notice and the facts are fully ascertained, will enforce respect for his order by duly punishing the offenders.

A matter in which not only the civil service reformer, but the whole commercial community takes a lively interest, is the improvement of our consular service. As is well known, certain rules were established under the last administration for the examination of candidates for consular offices drawing \$2,500 or less down to \$1,000 salary. It is reported that this system is being continued by the State Department, but in what manner and with what effect I am unable to say. Inquiries addressed to the State Department by the officers of this League as to the scope of the examinations and the relative number of those who have succeeded and those who have failed in them, have been answered to the effect that such things are treated as strictly confidential by the Department

and that the information cannot be furnished. I can only repeat what I said in former annual addresses, that a system of mere pass examinations may do some good when conducted with particular conscientiousness and courageous independence from political influence, and may then, as Secretary Olney called his measure, be "a step in the right direction," but that, as all experience has shown, pass examinations are apt to degenerate into a mere matter of form, a mere pretense of a test of qualifications, in which as a rule those succeed who have the strongest backing, and those fail who have none. Pass examinations for the consular service have been tried at various periods, and they have always taken that course. Whether they have or not in the present instance, I am unable to tell, the matter being strictly confidential. But this I may say with assurance: If our commercial community wants a real reform in the method of appointment to consular positions, it must insist upon three things: *competitive* examinations for admission to the lowest grade of the consular service, promotion only for merit, and removal only for cause. From this rule should, at most, only those few consular positions be excepted that have a diplomatic character.

The postmaster, too, is receiving promising attention. It is a hopeful sign that the Postmaster-general, a business man not suspected of being a civil service reform theorist, has from a mere business point of view found it expedient to advocate the removal, by Congress, of those restrictions by which the consolidation of minor offices with those which are central, had been hampered. And although the subjection to proper civil service rules of the fourth class post offices, which so far have furnished the material for the most widespread spoils scandals, may as yet seem ever so far away, still it is approaching and may be nearer than even the most sanguine among us now apprehend.

"The system has the approval of the people, and it will be my endeavor to uphold and extend it." These are the closing words of the paragraph touching civil service reform in the President's annual message. In his endeavor to uphold and extend the merit system the President will have a larger majority of the people on his side than any of his predecessors ever had, for what formerly seemed to be only a dream of idealists, is now a practical fact, well understood and recognized in its



beneficial effects by the enlightened public opinion of the country. As I pointed out in my last annual address, not one of President McKinley's predecessors has, since the enactment of the civil service law, failed to distinguish his administration by large and important extensions of the domain of the merit system. It would be doing injustice to his motives as well as to his powers to fear that in his achievements President McKinley might remain behind the best of them. He has signalized the very beginning of his administration by an advance of exceeding importance. And now, considering that wellnigh the whole clerical part of the governmental machinery was already under the merit system when he took office, and need only be protected against the wily attempts of spoils politics to invade it, we may hope that President McKinley may recognize it as his part of the great work, to carry the reform beyond those limits. There is good reason for believing that the necessities of the consular service have already engaged his care; and whoever undertakes seriously the task of putting that, as well as any other, branch of the government service upon a footing of thorough efficiency, will soon recognize that the first requirement is its absolute emancipation from the influence of the patronage mongers.

There is a force working for civil service reform which is now far more effective than ever before. It is the character of the opposition to it. As the number of good citizens favoring our cause increased and grew into a majority, the opposition became numerically weaker but far more desperate and vociferous. And the more it becomes desperate and vociferous, the more recklessly it discloses its true nature and its aims. Civil service reform is now gaining in the esteem and friendship of the people, not only by the recognition of its correct principles and in good results, but also "for the enemies it has made." The very shamelessness with which certain Republican politicians now clamor for the repudiation of their platform pledge to enforce and extend the civil service law—a pledge of which Mr. McKinley in the House of Representatives once said that "if the Republican party is pledged to one thing more than another it is the maintenance of the civil service law, and its enlargement and further application to the service"—the very vehemence with

which they rush upon the President they have just elected, to force him to break his word and to proclaim himself a dishonest man—the very audacity with which they seek to deceive the people with the most barefaced falsehoods about the civil service system—and all this for the palpable purpose of looting the government for party spoil—these very exhibitions of unscrupulousness and fury make unprejudiced men, who never cared much about civil service reform, stop and ask: “What does this all mean? Can a fight carried on so indecently be a good fight? Must not the right be on the other side?”

There was a rumor in the newspapers that the opponents of civil service reform planned a national convention to be held in this very city of Cincinnati for the purpose of organizing a grand movement for the overthrow of the civil service law. This plan is very much to be commended and I fervently hope that its promoters will strain every nerve to insure its execution. Nothing could be a more striking object lesson than a grand muster of the enemies of civil service reform in bodily exhibition. Nothing could be more edifying to the people of Ohio than an open denunciation of the honored son of their State who now stands at the head of the republic, by members of his own party for doing his manifest duty as President and patriot. Nothing could be more generally instructive than clear avowals by themselves of their principles and aims.

Their leading statesman, Representative Grosvenor, has already sounded the keynote of their movement by a cry of exultation with which, in a letter to a Washington newspaper, he recently greeted the triumph of that nest of political pirates, Tammany Hall in the city of New York. Mr. Grosvenor says: “The battle cry of Van Wyck (the Tammany candidate for Mayor) is a liberal political education to the people of the United States. He won a victory unprecedented, and he gave out but one great battle cry, and that thrilled through the hearts of a great body of the American people and an echo will be heard. That battle cry was: ‘I will put none but Democrats into office in New York.’” Mr. Grosvenor can hardly ignore the fact that there was, accompanying this, another and kindred Tammany battle cry: “To hell with reform!” the two watchwords being inseparably united. And then, after this enthusiastic greeting to Tammany Hall, Mr. Grosvenor

admonishes the Republican party to follow Tammany's example, thus: "We must teach the members of the Republican party that it is responsible for the administration of the government when it is in power, and to that end we must teach the people that the instrumentalities of government from highest to lowest during Republican administration shall be placed in the hands of Republicans." There can be no doubt of what this means: A clean sweep from top to bottom, from Cabinet minister to scrub woman, with every change of party in power! The battle cry from which political parties are to receive their strongest inspiration, is to be: "To the victors belong the spoils, and every government employment shall be spoil!" The kindred battle cry: "To hell with reform!" will soon follow. And the result? A great Democratic Tammany on one side and a great Republican Tammany on the other fighting for public plunder and casting lots for the garments of the crucified republic.

What spectacle could be more significant than that of the Republican enemy of civil service reform jubilantly congratulating the Tammany Tiger upon his triumph and proclaiming to the world their common ideal of government! Let this ideal be soberly contemplated by an intelligent people who wish to be proud of their country and to preserve its institutions. Such are the hostile forces the friends of civil service reform has to contend with. Can our victory be doubtful? The enemy being desperate, the struggle now before us may be arduous and bitter. But it is likely to be the last. General Grant's Wilderness campaign of 1864 was the bloodiest of the civil war. But when it began the rebellion was in fact already broken and doomed. Whoever still fights for the spoils system sacrifices himself for a lost cause. The final victory cannot fail to be with sound democratic principles, reason, and civilization.

## MEETING OF THE LEAGUE.

COLLEGE HALL, December 16, 1897,  
2.30 P. M.

The President took the chair.

The Secretary made a verbal report covering the work of his office during the year, and reviewing the course of Congress, and of the present administration, with reference to those matters having to do with reform in the federal civil service. On motion the report was accepted.

The President announced the next business in order to be the reception of reports from representatives of local Associations.

Mr. Clinton Rogers Woodruff, for the Pennsylvania Association, reported as follows :

“ When in August, 1895, the State Republican Convention of Pennsylvania, composed of delegates from every county in the State, adopted resolutions favoring civil service reform with scarcely a dissenting voice, civil service reformers were justified in a reasonable hope that the spoils system existing in this State was likely to be abolished in the near future. Such an utterance was on a basis entirely different than that of a promise of a candidate—it was the carefully prepared and formally expressed pledge of a great party of forty years standing, representing a large majority of the voters of the Commonwealth.

“ Thus it will be seen that the Republican party in Pennsylvania was solemnly pledged to the enactment of certain greatly needed reform legislation, and as the bills providing for these reforms had been drafted by a committee of the State Convention, and formally endorsed and made a part of the Republican platform, it was reasonably expected that their passage by the Legislature when it assembled in January, 1897, would take but a short time. There was no doubt in the minds of any one that United States Senator Quay, who had been responsible for the insertion of the reform planks in the platform, and who was successful in his fight for the control of the party machine because he had unequivocally espoused the cause of reform, was in supreme control in the Legislature.

“ When Mr. Quay made his peace with certain ward leaders in Philadelphia, signs began to multiply with great rapidity that notwithstanding the great Republican majority in the Legislature, and the explicit Republican pledges, reform legislation would have as thorny a path in the Pennsylvania Legislature as it had had at any previous session. In the meantime the Civil Service Reform bill had passed the Senate and was sent over to the House for concurrence. It was referred to a committee from which, after a very considerable delay, it was reported. Once on

the calendar it was delayed and postponed for various reasons, and then sent back to the committee for amendment ; really to have its vital features eliminated. Here it remained until within a week of adjournment, late in June.

" A proposition was made by the civil service reformers, while the bill was in committee, under advisement and waiting orders from Washington, to introduce a local option feature, so that it could become operative in those counties expressing, by a majority vote, their desire to have the provisions of the law apply. Upon a careful examination of adjudicated cases it was found that such a provision would be unconstitutional. Then the proposition was made to submit the whole question directly to a vote of the people. This the professional politicians were afraid to do, and they would not consent to such a plan. Finally the bill came out amended ; or perhaps we would more appropriately describe the process as emasculation.

" This altered bill proved a grotesque burlesque of civil service reform. How its sponsors could advocate its passage, in view of their platform pledges, it is difficult to understand. It provided for a Commission composed of three State officers ; for a four year tenure of office, and for an examination at the end of every four years conducted by the Department of Education. Thus it was proposed to fulfill the solemnly declared pledges of a great party, but those sincerely interested in genuine civil service reform were not misled by such a trick and they bent their energies to encompass its defeat. They succeeded, after a hard fight.

" We are not discouraged nor cast down because of this betrayal. We believe that the cause of civil service reform at present has a deeper and more abiding hold on the voters of the State than at any previous time. The prospect is that there will be a reaction in favor of better government and more decent politics in the State, as well as in Philadelphia, the result of which will be the elimination of those leaders and bosses who have so long prostituted the Republican party to their own selfish personal interests."

Mr. Hitchcock, of St. Louis, introduced Mr. A. R. Verdier as representing both the Missouri Civil Service Reform Association and the Civic Federation of St. Louis. Mr. Verdier said :

The Civic Federation of St. Louis, of which I have the honor to be the Secretary, was organized for general Municipal Reform ; its efforts not being confined to, but including the introduction of the Merit System in our Municipal offices. Last year we undertook the reform of our Board of Education, that being looked generally upon as the most corrupt of our city departments. We succeeded in securing the passage of a new school law in our State Legislature, against the combined opposition of the entire St. Louis delegation in the lower House, abolishing the old Board and providing for a new one, consisting of twelve members, elected at large. Sixty days after the passage of this bill, at a special election, we elected a ticket composed of eminently

capable men, and under their direction in July, 1897, was held, what was probably the first competitive examination in St. Louis for public place, when two hundred applicants were examined for positions as Janitors.

At the first regular meeting of our association in the fall of this year, after an adjournment during the summer months, a large variety of work was outlined and conferred to committees. Among the subjects was that of Civil Service Reform, and after careful consideration the Executive Committee fixed upon this reform as the most important one to be taken up, in view of the fact that our City Council was preparing a set of amendments to our City Charter to be submitted to the Citizens at an election in 1898. A petition asking that a Civil Service provision be included in them, was prepared, and is now being circulated and hundreds are signing it. We find nine out of every ten men enthusiastically in favor of the proposition, although the misrepresentations made by its enemies in Congress and elsewhere are not without their effect. However, we hope to secure twenty-five or thirty thousand signatures before presenting our petition and by keeping a careful record of the name and address of every signer, to be in a position, in case of necessity to make an issue of this question at the next election, and carry the day.

As our Charter can only be amended by vote of the people, we are seeking to secure a broad provision modeled on the New York State Law, leaving the details of application to city ordinances. With a machine administration the odds are against us, but still we hope by the time of the next meeting of this League to be able to report the enactment of a law which shall place St. Louis in the van rank so far as the management of her public offices are concerned, through the introduction of the Merit System.

Col. John W. Elm, for the Civil Service Reform League of Chicago, reported as follows:

There has been a change of administration in Chicago since the last annual meeting of the League. As the law was only put into operation by the last administration after many discharges and appointments in the different departments, and as the present administration is of different politics, the law is now having its principal test. While the present Mayor declares himself in harmony with the spirit of the law and says it shall be enforced, he desires several changes and his chief law-officer and many of his active supporters are opposed to the law and to the principle upon which it is based. The Civil Service Commission (appointed by the present Mayor) is composed of good citizens, and its President has been known for some time as an advocate of the merit system. A considerable proportion of the friends of the law believe that the Commissioners are endeavoring to do their duty, as they see it. There is tremendous pressure brought to bear upon them by people who demand their reward for political service, as is usual at a change of administration, and who are surprised and indignant at discovering that there is actually a law in force which takes the offices out of the spoils-

pot. Many friends of the law have felt like standing by the Commission and giving them the benefit of their encouragement, so long as they appeared to be honestly doing all they could to resist these attacks and to carry out the provisions of the law.

Our Civil Service Reform League has a Committee to watch the execution of the Civil Service Law in Chicago, call the attention of the Commissioners to any matters which require it, and proceed to enforce their requirements, through the courts or otherwise, if they deem necessary. If it should at any time be discovered that the law is not being enforced in good faith, I think there will be no hesitation with any of its friends in compelling its strict enforcement.

There is a suit now pending in the State Supreme Court in which the constitutionality of the law is involved. A decision is expected in this case very soon now, and we feel quite certain that the law will be sustained. There is also a suit by the Commission against the Board of Education to compel that Board to come under the law, in which suit the Circuit Court has decided that this important Board is a Department of the City Government, and therefore subject to all the provisions of Civil Service Law. This case has been appealed by the Board to the Supreme Court. The appeal is now pending.

There is also a proceeding by the Commissioners for a mandamus to compel the Secretary of one of the general departments of the city to testify in an investigation by the Commission. The defendant in that proceeding attacks the constitutionality of the provision of the law, allowing the courts to compel the giving of testimony before the Commission. The case has been argued and is held under advisement by the Circuit Court.

The atmosphere is clouded in some respects by all this litigation, but will probably be cleared when we get the decision of the Supreme Court sustaining the law in all its essential provisions, which we confidently expect within a very short time.

Brief reports were also made by Mr. Charles J. Bonaparte, for the Maryland Association; Mr. Sherman S. Rogers, for Buffalo; Rev. W. R. Lord, for St. Paul; Mr. William Dudley Foulke, for Indiana; and Mr. F. L. Siddons, for the District of Columbia.

Mr. Foulke then made a verbal report for the Committee on Congressional action appointed by the Executive Committee at its meeting of October 4. He stated that the Committee would be represented at Washington during the remainder of the winter, and that the programme already submitted to the Executive Committee, and by them approved, would be followed as closely as might prove practicable.

Mr. Siddons, of Washington, addressed the League with reference to the proposed exemption of the force to be employed in connection with the taking of the Twelfth Census,

from classification under the civil service rules. He urged that a special report be prepared and circulated by the Committee on Congressional action, showing the unsatisfactory results of the organization of the Census Bureau in 1890 on a patronage basis, and proposing legislation that would insure the classification of the Bureau, before its reorganization, for the highly important work now to be undertaken.

The Secretary, on behalf of the Special Committee on Reform in the Consular Service, made a verbal report concerning the changes among Consuls made under the present administration. The results of such changes he summarized as follows:

There are at present in the Consular Service, 284 Consulates and Consulates-General, and 30 commercial agencies, having practically the rank of Consulates—314 in all. Of these, 9 are filled by Diplomatic officers who serve in a dual capacity; 15 are vacant. There are thus 290 officers of the class in question now in the service, as follows:

(1) Between the grades of \$2,500 and \$1,000 annual salary. (Subject to non-competitive examination) .....	186
(2) In grades above \$2,500 annual salary. (Exempt from examination) .....	55
(3) In grades below \$1,000 annual salary, paid by fees. (Exempt from examination) .....	49
	<hr/> 290

The proportion of changes in each of these classes since March 3, 1897, and the proportion of previously appointed incumbents remaining on December 1, is shown by the following:

	Changes.	Percent- age.	Officers retained.	
(1)	103	.55	33	186
(2)	45	.81	10	55
(3)	12	.24	37	49
				<hr/> 290

It will thus be seen that during the first nine months of the administration, fifty-five per cent. of the Consular officers coming within the scope of the examination system established by President Cleveland, in September, 1895, have been changed, and that among the salaried officers of all classes the percentage of changes has been sixty-one, or nearly two-thirds. There is no appreciable difference, so far as proportion is concerned, between the changes under the present administration and those made by Assistant Secretary Quincy during the corresponding period of the previous administration. The service has been deranged as seriously as before, and changes continue to be made daily. The



is well as in tenure of office.  
On motion the report was  
A paper: "Civil Service," prepared by Dr. Al  
read by Mr. Welsh, of Phil.  
The Secretary presented  
ace E. Deming, of New York  
same subject.†

On motion the League th

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The League re-convened a  
The business in order bei  
cers, the President called M  
Chair.

Mr. Woodruff, of Pennsylv  
for President of the League for  
nation was seconded by various  
was unanimously elected. In a  
League for the continued confic  
resumed the chair.

On motion of Mr. Wilby, of  
directed to cast one ballot for the  
the gentlemen

The Secretary cast the ballot, and the gentlemen named were declared elected.

Mr. Siddons for the Auditing Committee appointed by the Executive Committee, submitted the following report :

December 17, '97.

*To the National Civil Service Reform League :*

The undersigned, constituting the Auditing Committee, respectfully report that we have examined the accounts of the Treasurer,\* comparing them with the vouchers. We find them correct, and that the amount in the treasury at this date is \$366.13.

JOHN W. ELA,  
FRED'K. L. SIDDONS.

On motion the report was accepted and ordered filed.

Mr. Bonaparte, for the Committee on Resolutions, read the resolutions prepared and submitted them for the action of the League.

Mr. Foulke, of Indiana, moved that the resolutions be considered and acted on seriatim, and the motion was carried.

The resolutions were then re-read, and after some discussion, were adopted unanimously in the following form :

(1) The National Civil Service Reform League, assembled in this, its seventeenth annual meeting, reminds the country of the specific and emphatic pledges of the last Republican National Convention thoroughly and honestly to enforce the present Federal Civil Service Law, and to extend its operation wherever practicable. The League confidently expects from the President, and demands from every Republican Senator and Representative, a faithful fulfillment of this distinct and solemn pledge.

(2) The League denounces any attempt on the part of Republican members of either House or Congress, to repeal the law or embarrass its administration, or in any way to modify of its provisions, except to the end that the merit system of selection for public officers and employees may be extended, and personal or partisan favoritism in their choice more thoroughly eradicated ; and declares such attempts, not only unpatriotic and unwise, but gross and shameful breaches of party faith, of which no man of honor would be guilty.

(3) The League recognizes in the order of President McKinley forbidding removals in the classified service unless for good cause and after due notice to the person accused, a wise and just measure, fully endorsed by an enlightened public opinion, and it demands for this order a fair

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\*Page 45.

bountiful hospitality received from each during the period of these meetings.

The motion was carried unanimously.

The League then adjourned.

*Attest:*

GEORGE McANENY,

*Secretary.*

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On the evening of the 17th, the visiting delegates were entertained by the Civil Service Reform Association of Cincinnati at a banquet given at the Hotel St. Nicholas. Justice William R. Taft, President of the Cincinnati Association, presided, and addresses were made by Carl Schurz; Senator James R. Garfield, of Cleveland; Gustav Tafel, Mayor of Cincinnati; Herbert Welsh, of Philadelphia; Col. John E. Ela, of Chicago; Lucius B. Swift, of Indiana; Lewis R. Gunckel, of Dayton, and Charles J. Bonaparte, of Baltimore.

# ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TREASURER.

*Balance on hand, Dec. 10, 1896,* . . . . . **\$172.97**

## RECEIPTS:

Subscriptions from members of Massachu-		
setts Associations.....	<b>\$1,400.00</b>	
“ “ Cambridge (additional)..	71.90	
“ “ Newton, “ ..	50.00	
“ “ Mass. Reform Club....	250.00	
“ “ Philadelphia .....	725.75	
“ “ New York.....	630.00	
“ “ St. Louis.....	221.50	
“ “ Cincinnati .....	55.00	
“ “ Washington.....	150.00	
“ “ Buffalo.....	27.00	
“ “ Chicago .....	375.00	
“ “ Miscellaneous .....	100.00	
Pamphlets sold.....	15.83	<b>4,071.98</b>
		<b>\$4,244.95</b>

## DISBURSEMENTS:

Proportion of Secretary's salary.....	<b>\$1,200.00</b>	
Clerk hire .....	598.75	
Rent of office .....	150.00	
Printing.....	637.00	
Postage .....	129.00	
Traveling expenses .....	296.15	
Expenses of Washington Committee.....	94.77	
“ “ Finance Committee.....	42.80	
<i>Congressional Record</i> , and Documents.....	21.29	
Office furniture.....	29.00	
Office expenses, miscellaneous.....	180.06	
Paid F. E. Leupp, on account of <i>Good Gov-</i>		
<i>ernment</i> .....	500.00	<b>3,878.82</b>

*Balance on hand* ..... **\$366.13**

E. & O. E.

A. S. FRISSELL,  
*Treasurer.*

# The Republican Party and Civil Service Reform.

By HENRY HITCHCOCK.

Fifteen years, less one month, have now elapsed since the statute was enacted, which embedded in the framework and administrative policy of the national government the wholesome doctrine that public office is a public trust, and that public servants, charged with subordinate administrative duties, ought to be appointed, not because of political opinions, nor as a reward for partisan service, but for merit and fitness alone. That great legislative event was thus recorded in the Address of President Curtis, at the second annual meeting of this League:

“On the 16th of January, 1883, upon the earnest recommendation of the President, and by overwhelming majorities in Congress, the Pendleton bill became a law, and on the 16th of July, 1883, amid the general applause of the country, it went into effect.”

That doctrine was not new. The fathers of the republic not only proclaimed but practiced it, as an axiom of political morals. Washington required of applicants for office proofs of ability, integrity and fitness. “Beyond this,” he said, “nothing with me is necessary or will be of any avail to them in my decision.” In at least one historic instance he preferred for appointment an avowed political opponent to a valued personal friend, upon the express ground that the latter did not possess the business qualifications of the former. Jefferson proclaimed it on the threshold of his first administration, declaring that of the thousands of officers in the United States a very few individuals only,—probably not twenty—would be removed, and these only for doing what they ought not to have done. Again, in his famous letter to the merchants of New Haven, he declared that the only questions concerning a candidate should be,—“Is he honest? Is he capable? Is he faithful

to the Constitution?" And Madison, Monroe and John Quincy Adams so faithfully followed their example that the Joint Congressional Committee upon Retrenchment reported, in 1868, that after having consulted all accessible means of information they had not learned of a single removal of a subordinate officer except for cause, from the beginning of Washington's administration to the close of that of John Quincy Adams,—a period of forty years.

It is not the purpose of this paper to trace the steps by which, during the succeeding forty years, a very different doctrine gained ascendancy and an opposite practice came to prevail. The history of the spoils system, its corrupting tendencies and the menace which it involves to the perpetuity of our government, are unhappily familiar to every student of American politics, — to none more than the members of this League, whose privilege and delight it was, year by year, to listen to the annual addresses of our lamented President, distinguished alike for their historic accuracy and fullness, their persuasive and manly eloquence and their captivating literary form. Those addresses, and other papers, not less brilliant and memorable, prepared by Mr. Curtis from the year 1869 up to the organization of this League, in August, 1881, contain also — and not only contain but to an important degree constitute,— the history of the struggle to overthrow the spoils system which began in 1867, and after fifteen years of determined effort, of varying success and frequent disappointment, was crowned with the sanction of law in 1883.

That Act, substantially unchanged, and, as we rejoice to know, honestly enforced, stands upon the statute book to-day. But the struggle and the conflict are not ended. Both before and since its enactment, in Congress and among the people at large, able men of all political parties have enlisted on one or the other side of the controversy. During all these thirty years, in presidential messages and declarations of policy, in Congressional debates and in the successive platforms of the great political parties, the reform of the civil service, the mischiefs and dangers of the spoils system and the methods by which they ought to be prevented, have been conspicuous topics. In Congress efforts have again and again been made, hitherto always

unsuccessful, to repeal the Civil Service Act of 1883, or to destroy its efficiency by refusing the necessary appropriations, in which members of both the great parties have joined.

In March last, a new Administration assumed the reins of government, and within the past ten days the 55th Congress has assembled for its first regular session. The election of its candidate for President in 1896, and of a large majority in the House of Representatives, assures to the Republican party, if not the absolute control of the legislation of this Congress, at any rate the power to prevent the repeal or modification of any existing law. Scarcely had that Administration assumed the responsibilities of office, and while the new Congress was occupied with questions of revenue legislation whose urgency had induced the President to call an extra session, when the formation of an anti-civil service reform league was loudly announced. During that extra session speeches were made, both in the Senate and the House, by members of that party, elaborately and savagely attacking and misrepresenting not only the methods and provisions of the Civil Service Act, but the principles upon which it is based. And, if the press reports are correct, on the second day of the regular session which begun last week, the deliberations of the House as to the proper reference of the various portions of the President's annual message were interrupted and delayed by speeches from two members, one a Democratic representative from Alabama, the other elected as a Republican from Ohio, both bitterly denouncing the Civil Service Act, advocating the abandonment of the merit system, and taking issue with the President's statement that it has the approval of the people.

Under these circumstances, the actual relation of the Republican party to civil service reform and the probable or even possible attitude of that party towards the system now established by law, are questions not only germane to the objects of this League but which may well receive the earnest consideration of its members, and of the people at large.

How shall those questions be answered? By what rules may we reasonably forecast the attitude of any political

party? By what test may we fairly determine the obligations and gauge the fidelity of its members, especially of those whom it has placed in office,—above all, those who have been elected to the State or National Legislature, as fit and loyal representatives of the party policy? Obviously we must look, we can only look, to the formal declarations of its policy publicly made by that party through its authorized or official representatives, and to the public or official acts of its recognized leaders. Thus only can the policy of any party be made known. Only by accepting that test can any party organization reasonably or honorably claim public confidence or support. Doubtless any political party may change its policy; for party organization is only a means to an end, and every citizen, under a government of the people, is free at any time to adopt in good faith whatever political views or principles may commend themselves to his judgment and to support whatever party best represents those views. These are mere truisms. But it follows from them that no political party which has come into power by professing certain principles or proclaiming a given policy as its own, can consistently or honorably abandon those principles or repudiate that policy and still hold fast to the power or deserve the confidence and support thus gained. And what is true of the party is true of each one of its official representatives, since it can speak and act through them alone.

Above all is it true of the legislator who owes his seat, and his share in the law-making power, to the confidence of the people in the pledges of his party. When the question is not merely of methods, as to which a large discretion must be allowed, but of the substantial fulfillment or the repudiation of those pledges, the man of honor can have but one choice,—he must fulfill those pledges or he must resign.

What position, then, has the Republican party of the United States publicly taken in respect of civil service reform? What policy has it announced, what pledges has it given through its authorized representatives?

The platform, or formal declaration of its policy, adopted by the National Republican Convention at St. Louis, on June 18, 1896, by a vote of 818½ to 105½, leaves no doubt on that point.



I quote from that platform as follows :

**“ The Civil Service law was placed on the statute book by the Republican party, which has always sustained it, and we renew our repeated declarations that it shall be thoroughly and honestly enforced and extended wherever practicable.”**

The concluding paragraph of that official document, referring to each and all of the declarations which preceded it, was as follows :

**“ Such are the principles and policies of the Republican party. By these principles we will abide, and these policies we will put into execution. We ask for them the considerate judgment of the American people.”**

That Convention having nominated William McKinley as the Republican candidate for the Presidency at the election in November, 1896, this declaration of the party policy was officially communicated to him with the tender of said nomination. On August 26, 1896, he formally accepted the nomination in a letter to the Notification Committee, in which he considered in detail the “ questions at issue in the pending campaign.” From that letter I quote as follows :

**“ The pledge of the Republican National Convention that our civil service laws ‘ shall be sustained and thoroughly and honestly enforced, and extended wherever practicable,’ is in keeping with the position of the party for the past twenty-four years and will be faithfully observed. Our opponents decry these reforms. They appear to be willing to abandon all the advantages gained after so many years’ agitation and effort. They encourage a return to methods of party favoritism which both parties have often denounced, that experience has condemned, and that the people have repeatedly disapproved. The Republican party earnestly opposes this reactionary and entirely unjustifiable policy. It will take no backward step on this question. It will seek to improve, but never to degrade the public service.”**

The National Democratic Convention which met at Chicago on July 7, 1896, accepted the issue thus tendered. The

civil service plank in that platform, while characteristically ambiguous, denounced what was called, "Life tenure in the Civil Service," and it is a matter of political history that the Democratic candidate for President and his supporters proclaimed their determination, if they should obtain control of the Government, to abolish the system established by the Civil Service Act of 1883. There was no doubt in the public mind, when the general elections of 1896 were held, what was the position of either party upon the question of civil service reform.

Upon the issues thus made up, the contending parties went to the country. The American people responded by electing William McKinley President of the United States by a plurality of 573,000 and a clear majority over all opponents of about 258,000 votes. The unqualified promise of the Republican party, not only to sustain but to honestly enforce and extend the existing civil service law, was accepted by the people.

On March 4, 1897, President McKinley, on taking the oath of office, made the customary Inaugural Address, setting forth the policy of his Administration. From this I quote the following passage relating to the civil service:

"Reforms in the civil service must go on, but the change should be real and genuine, not perfunctory, or prompted by a zeal in behalf of any party, simply because it happens to be in power. As a member of Congress I voted and spoke in favor of the present law, and I shall attempt its enforcement in the spirit in which it was enacted. The purpose in view was to secure the most efficient service of the best men who would accept appointment under the government, retaining faithful and devoted public servants in office, but shielding none under the authority of any rule or custom who are inefficient, incompetent or unworthy. The best interests of the country demand this, and the people heartily approve the law wherever and whenever it has been thus administered."

These declarations, I need hardly remind you, are in complete harmony with the utterances and the votes of President McKinley during his long and distinguished service in the House of Representatives. Of those utterances,

one illustration will suffice. In 1890, the most strenuous attempt of all was made to cripple the operation of the Civil Service Act by cutting down the appropriations necessary to carry it into effect. Mr. McKinley, then Chairman of the House Committee of Ways and Means, successfully led the opposition in a speech from which I quote as follows:

“ Mr. Chairman, if the Republican party of this country is pledged to any one thing more than another, it is the maintenance of the civil service law and to its efficient execution — not only that, but to its enlargement and its further application to the public service.

“ The law that stands upon our statute books to-day was put there by Republican votes. It was a Republican measure. Every national platform of the Republican party, since its enactment, has declared not only in favor of its continuance in full vigor, but in favor of its enlargement so as to apply more generally to the public service. And this, Mr. Chairman, is not alone the declaration and purpose of the Republican party, but it is in accordance with its highest and best sentiment — aye, more, it is sustained by the best sentiment of the whole country, Republican and Democratic alike.”

It is well known that since his inauguration the President has carried out these pledges with characteristic integrity. It is said that strong efforts have been made to induce him to modify the civil service regulations in a sense unfriendly to genuine reform: but if so, such efforts have failed. Suggestions respectfully submitted to the President, on behalf of this League, touching the practical working of the Act and apparently desirable amendments to the civil service rules, have been received and considered in a frank and cordial spirit most gratifying to your representatives. Two important amendments to the civil service rules have been promulgated by the President.

Rule II, relating to dismissals from office, has been amended in a very important respect by adding the following:

“ No removal shall be made from any position subject to competitive examination except for just cause and upon

written charges filed with the head of the Department, or other appointing officer, and of which the accused shall have full notice and an opportunity to make defense."

This amendment has met the hearty approbation of the friends of the reform. It is manifestly just, and is an additional safeguard against the arbitrary dismissal of meritorious employees, really for political reasons, but upon some other pretext, while avoiding the opposite danger of restricting the indispensable power of prompt removal where just cause exists.

Rule VI, which prescribes exceptions from the requirements of examination or registration, is amended, as to the custom-house service, by extending to all customs districts and to each sub-port or station, the exemption of one chief or principal deputy or assistant collector, heretofore confined to customs districts whose employees numbered one hundred and fifty or more; and as to the internal revenue service, by extending the exemption, already in force, of one employee in each internal revenue district who shall act as cashier or chief deputy or assistant collector, so as to include also one deputy collector in each internal revenue district where the number of employees in the collector's office exceeds four, and one deputy collector in each stamp or branch office. But this rule as amended, further provides that all appointments to the positions in the customs and internal revenue service excepted by this rule shall be subject to an examination to be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury, not disapproved by the Civil Service Commission, equal to the examination held by said commission for positions of like grade, such examinations to be conducted by the Commission, in accordance with its regulations.

All the amendments above mentioned were recommended by the Secretary of the Treasury, and approved by the Civil Service Commission.

In entire harmony with these official acts and declarations, the first Annual Message of President McKinley, received by Congress on the 6th of this month, included among other topics the further improvement of the civil service, renewing his pledges to that end. And while referring to the power of removal for incompetency or inefficiency as

a vital safeguard to the reform, the President again declared his conviction that the system has the approval of the people, and his purpose to uphold and extend it.

If, as I have assumed, the true attitude and policy of a great political party, and the obligations to the people at large which it accepts by seeking and gaining success at the polls, are to be judged by the formal declarations and pledges of its authorized representatives, by the political issues which it tenders to its opponents and by the official acts and declarations of those who, in its name and through its support, have been charged with the responsibilities of government,—then the inquiry as to the present attitude and obligations of the Republican party of the United States, in respect of the conduct of the civil service, the honest enforcement and extension of the existing civil service law, the faithful application of the merit system to appointments and removals from administrative offices, and the unflinching opposition to the spoils system which that implies, is fully answered by the acts and declarations above stated. If the Republican party, and the men who on the faith of its promises have been entrusted by the people of the United States with the conduct of the government, are not pledged to these things, to what are they pledged? In no partisan spirit, but as a citizen who values the immense power of party organization in proportion as it is honestly used for worthy ends, I rejoice that such an answer can be made to that inquiry,—still more in the assurance afforded by the exalted personal character and honorable public career of the President, that these pledges will be faithfully kept.

Such is the present attitude of the Republican party in relation to civil service reform. But the history and traditions of a great party count for much in any horoscope of its future. As we have seen, that party, at the opening of the campaign of 1896, in submitting its principles and policy to the considerate judgment of the American people, not only claimed for itself the authorship of the Civil Service Act of 1883, and the credit of having always sustained it, but referred to its repeated declarations, once more renewed, that it “shall be thoroughly and honestly enforced and extended wherever practicable.”

It may be of interest to briefly recall the facts which support that claim, with some reference to events which preceded them, in which prominent Republicans took part. And in so doing, I desire to acknowledge with sincere thanks the valuable data furnished me by the indefatigable and thoroughly well-informed Secretary of the League.

As already stated, the enactment of the civil service law of 1883 was the culmination of a struggle which really began in Congress in 1867. Three years earlier, in 1864, that eminent Republican, Charles Sumner, of Massachusetts, introduced in the Senate the first civil service reform bill; but it was not seriously discussed or acted upon in either House.

In January, 1867, Thomas A. Jenckes, an able and prominent Republican member of the House from Rhode Island, presented an elaborate report from the Joint Committee on Retrenchment of the 39th Congress, embodying a vast amount of authentic information, including the experience of foreign governments, concerning the proper conduct of the civil service, and advocating its reform substantially on the lines since adopted. In May, 1868, in the 40th Congress, Mr. Jenckes presented a second report, accompanied by a bill to regulate the civil service, which was made a special order for a subsequent day. The facts and principles set forth in these two reports, covering three hundred printed pages, were supported by Mr. Jenckes in speeches of great force, and furnished data of great value to the Civil Service Commission of 1871: but it was seed time, too early for harvest, and his party did not commit itself to the measure. But the seed was sown, the education of public sentiment began, and one of its earliest and most valuable lessons was contained in the masterly address of George William Curtis before the American Social Science Association in October, 1869, upon civil service reform.

In March, 1869, President Grant's first term began. In his annual message of December, 1870, he earnestly called the attention of Congress to the necessity of a reform in the civil service, declaring that no duty so much embarrassed the executive and heads of departments as that of appointments, that no such arduous and thankless labor was

imposed upon Senators and Representatives as that of finding places for constituents, that the existing system did not secure the best men, and often not even fit men for public places, and that the elevation and purification of the civil service would be hailed with approval by the whole people of the United States.

During the last week of that session of Congress, ending March 3, 1871, Senator Trumbull, of Illinois, introduced a bill which went to the House in the form of an amendment to the pending appropriation bill. It passed both Houses, and was approved by the President on the same day, March 3. This bill, now known as Section 1753 of the Revised Statutes, was as follows:

“The President is authorized to prescribe such regulations for the admission of persons into the civil service of the United States as may best promote the efficiency thereof and ascertain the fitness of each candidate in respect to age, health, character, knowledge, and ability for the branch of service into which he seeks to enter; and for this purpose he may employ suitable persons to conduct such inquiries, and may prescribe their duties, and establish regulations for the conduct of persons who may receive appointments in the civil service.”

It may fairly be said that in passing this bill, the Republican party, under the leadership of President Grant, whatever its subsequent shortcomings, distinctly took ground in favor of the reform, and President Grant during the next three years gave it his earnest support.

On March 4th, 1871, he appointed an excellent commission, with George William Curtis at its head, to prescribe rules for carrying the Act into effect. On December 18, 1871, the Commission presented its report, prepared by Mr. Curtis, with appropriate rules, which the President adopted, at once transmitting the report to Congress by special message, announcing his purpose to faithfully execute the rules, and asking for all the strength which Congress could give him to carry out the reforms proposed.

In April, 1872, the Advisory Board appointed by the President under these rules made a further report, grouping various offices, and accompanied by further regulations,

which were at once adopted and promulgated by executive order. In his annual message in December, 1872, the President, referring to the abuses which had grown up through appointments to office as a reward of political service, again declared his purpose to apply these rules so as to secure the greatest possible reform in the civil service, and recommended legislation to make them permanent. In his annual message of December, 1873, he again commended the reform to Congress, recommending the appointment of a committee of Congress to act with the Civil Service Board in devising permanent rules, "which will secure the services of honest and capable officials and which will also protect them in a degree of independence while in office."

In his annual message of December, 1874, the President again commended the reform to Congress, stating that the effect of the civil service rules was beneficial, and tended to elevate the service, but that it was impracticable to maintain them without direct and positive support of Congress: further stating that if Congress should adjourn without positive legislation on the subject he would regard such action as a disapproval of the system and that competitive examinations would be abandoned. Congress did adjourn without such action, and for the time the progress of the reform was arrested.

Meanwhile the growth of public sentiment in favor of the reform produced its effect upon the Republican party at large and even among certain of its leaders who would gladly have seen it fail. The National Republican platform of 1872 contained the following declaration:

"Any system of the civil service under which the subordinate positions of the Government are considered rewards for mere party zeal is fatally demoralizing, and we therefore favor a reform of the system by laws which shall abolish the evils of patronage and make honesty, efficiency, and fidelity the essential qualifications for public positions, without practically creating a life tenure of office."

The Republican platform of 1876, reported by Senator Hawley, of Connecticut, and unanimously adopted, contained the following:



“Under the constitution the President and heads of departments are to make nominations for office; the Senate is to advise and consent to appointments, and the House of Representatives is to accuse and prosecute faithless officers. The best interest of the public service demands that these distinctions be respected: that Senators and Representatives who may be judges and accusers should not dictate appointments to office. The invariable rule in appointments should have reference to the honesty, fidelity and capacity of the appointees, giving to the party in power those places where harmony and vigor of administration require its policy to be represented, but permitting all others to be filled by persons selected with sole reference to the efficiency of the public service, and the right of all citizens to share in the honor of rendering faithful service to the country.”

In March, 1877, President Hayes was inaugurated. In his Inaugural Address he dwelt upon the paramount necessity of reform in the civil service, referring to the platforms of both the Republican and the Democratic parties in 1876, as expressing the united voice and will of the whole country and virtually pledging both parties to give it their unreserved support. His first annual message in December, 1877, dwelt at length on the subject and urged an appropriation to enable the Civil Service Commission to continue its work. Mr. Curtis having resigned from the Commission in 1875, Mr. Dorman B. Eaton was subsequently appointed its chairman, and in May, 1877, at the request of the President, but at his own expense, visited England, studied the civil service system there, and subsequently published the result of his researches in his well-known and valuable Report entitled, “Civil Service in Great Britain.” But that Congress failed to respond to the President’s request, and his annual Message of December, 1879, again urged, at still greater length, the necessity of the reform, strongly denouncing the evils of a partisan spoils system, and referring to the repeated recommendations of President Grant, the salutary results of the competitive system established by the Civil Service Commission of 1871, and the additional testimony in favor of that system furnished by the reports of the Secretary of the Interior, the

Postmaster General, and the postmasters and collectors in New York and other large cities, where it was still maintained. I need not remind you with what firmness and complete practical success the Secretary of the Interior under President Hayes, now the honored and worthy successor of George William Curtis as President of this League, exemplified the methods and the benefits of genuine civil service reform throughout his department, during his entire term of office.

In June, 1880, the Republican National Convention adopted, without a division, as part of its official declaration of party principles and purposes, the following:

“ The Republican party, adhering to principles affirmed by its last National Convention of respect for the Constitutional rules covering appointments to office, adopts the declaration of President Hayes that the reform of the civil service should be thorough, radical and complete. To this end it demands the co-operation of the Legislative with the Executive Department of the Government, and that Congress shall so legislate that fitness, ascertained by proper, practical tests, shall admit to the public service.”

President Hayes' last message, in December, 1880, again recommended the reform of the civil service, especially in the method of appointment and removal by legislation; but no responsive legislation was had.

President Garfield, in his Inaugural Address, on March 4th, 1881, declaring that the civil service could never be placed on a satisfactory basis until it was regulated by law, announced his purpose, at the proper time, to ask Congress, for the good of the service and the protection of executive officers and employees, to legislate concerning appointments and removals. This purpose was defeated by his untimely and tragic death in September following. But his deliberate and public utterances in Congress and elsewhere, long previously made, leave no doubt as to what his recommendations would have been. Seldom, in brief compass, have the evils of what he described as “ the corrupting doctrine that ‘ to the victors belong the spoils,’ shamelessly announced as an article of political faith and practice,” been

more clearly pointed out than by General Garfield in an elaborate article entitled "A Century of Congress," published in the *Atlantic Monthly* for June, 1877.

The first session of the 47th Congress began on December 5th, 1881, the Senate being composed of 37 Republicans, 37 Democrats, 1 Independent and 1 Readjuster; and the House, of 290 members, of whom 150 were Republicans and 140 Democrats, with three vacant seats. President Arthur's first message, received on December 6th, discussed at length the plans proposed for the reform of the civil service. Conceding the success of the competitive system in Great Britain, he expressed doubts as to the applicability of some features of that system to the civil service of the United States. But he stated that if Congress should establish competitive tests for admission to the service, no such doubts would deter him from giving the measure his earnest support, and earnestly recommended the appropriation of \$25,000.00 per annum for the enforcement of the Civil Service Act of 1871; promising, with such aid, to execute the provisions of that law according to its letter and spirit. Congress responded by appropriating only \$15,000 for that purpose, under circumstances graphically told by Mr. Curtis in his first annual address as President of this League. To that address I must refer you for a characteristically brilliant sketch of the condition and prospects of the reform at that time, my present purpose being solely to state, as briefly as possible, the position of the Republican party through its representatives with reference to the reform.

On December 6, 1881, Mr. Pendleton, of Ohio, a Democrat, introduced in the Senate a bill bearing his name, but drafted by the Committee on Legislation of the New York Civil Service Reform Association, of which Mr. Dorman B. Eaton was chairman. And in January, another bill was introduced by Senator Dawes, of Massachusetts, a Republican, also looking to the substitution of merit for favor in minor appointments. These bills were referred to a committee, of which Senator Hawley of Connecticut, a Republican, was Chairman, which in May reported the Pendleton bill, somewhat amended, supporting it by a statement of the evils of the spoils system, a sketch of the movement for reform, and an appendix containing important

testimony concerning the reformed methods pursued in the New York Custom-House and Post Office. At the same session, bills of like character were introduced in the House and referred to a select committee on reforms in the civil service, but not reported on; nor was the Pendleton bill further discussed in the Senate at that session.

During the summer and fall of 1882, the friends of the reform, notably the President and members of this League, redoubled their efforts to arouse public sentiment, in view of the general election to be held in November. The result is a matter of history, and was thus tersely described by Mr. Curtis in his Annual Address at your meeting in August, 1883:

“ The issue was plainly made and an appeal taken at the polls. The result of the election was startling and impressive. The most conspicuous enemies of reform were dismissed by their constituents from the public service, and although it is not always easy precisely to define the significance of a general election, it was universally conceded, that, whatever else the result might mean, it was a clear and decisive demand of the country for civil service reform. The response of Congress was immediate and never was the flexibility of a popular system more signally displayed.”

The significance of this statement lies in the fact that the Republicans elected in November to the 48th Congress numbered only 119, as against 150 in the 47th, while the number of Democrats rose from 140 to 201. I must again refer you to Mr. Curtis' address for an account, sparkling with characteristic humor and delicate sarcasm, of the progress of the Pendleton bill in both houses when the 47th Congress re-assembled. From the moment that Congress met, the mandate of the people still thundering in their ears, this question took precedence over all others. The President's message frankly urged its passage and promised his hearty co-operation in enforcing it. Within a week it was taken up in the Senate, and was passed on December 27th by 38 yeas to 5 nays; 23 Republicans, of whom Benjamin Harrison, of Indiana, was one, 14 Democrats and 1 Independent voting for, and 5 Democrats against it. In the House, on January 4th, Mr. Kasson, of Iowa, a Republican,

and Chairman of the Civil Service Committee, reported the bill as passed by the Senate, without amendment. It was taken up under a suspension of the rules, thirty minutes debate allowed, and passed by 155 yeas to 47 nays; the affirmative vote being 100 Republicans, including William McKinley, 51 Democrats and 4 Independents: and the negative vote 39 Democrats, 7 Republicans and 1 Independent. Unquestionably the Republican party adopted and passed the Pendleton Bill, and by passing it, they fulfilled, at last, the promises which Republican National Conventions had constantly made for ten years preceding.

President Arthur promptly fulfilled his own promise to give the reform system fair play by appointing as Commissioners Mr. Dorman B. Eaton of New York, Dr. J. M. Gregory of Illinois, and Judge L. D. Thoman of Ohio; the gentleman first named being well described by Mr. Curtis in the same address as "one of the ablest, sincerest and most devoted friends of the reform." On March 9, 1883, the Commission was organized, and in July the system went into operation: the places originally included in the classified service, by direction of the President, numbering 13,924.

The Republican National Convention of 1884 met at Chicago on June 3, after a year's experience of the working of the system. The platform unanimously recommended by the Committee on Resolutions, as reported by William McKinley, Jr., of Ohio, and adopted without dissent, contained the following:

"Reform of the civil service, auspiciously begun under Republican administration, should be completed by the further extension of the reform system already established by law to all the grades of the service to which it is applicable. The spirit and purpose of the reform should be observed in all executive appointments, and all laws at variance with the objects of existing reform legislation should be repealed, to the end that the dangers to free institutions which lurk in the power of official patronage may be wisely and effectively avoided."

By the election of Mr. Cleveland as President in November, 1884, and of a clear majority of 21 in the House of Representatives of the 49th Congress, the Democratic party

became responsible for the enforcement of the Civil Service Act during the next four years. The conduct of the civil service during that period is not within the scope of this paper, but it may be noted that the number of classified places which during President Arthur's term had increased by natural growth to 15,573, was nearly doubled under President Cleveland: 7,259 being added by his orders, and 4,498 by natural growth, making a total of 27,320 at the close of his term. And the Democratic National Convention which, on June 5, 1888, at St. Louis, re-nominated Mr. Cleveland for the Presidency by acclamation, declared in its platform that "honest civil service reform has been inaugurated and maintained by President Cleveland and he has brought the public service to the highest standard of efficiency."

Two weeks later, on June 19, 1888, the Republican National Convention, at Chicago, met this challenge by nominating for President, Benjamin Harrison, who as a senator from Indiana had voted for the Pendleton bill in 1883, and against all subsequent efforts to repeal or cripple it, and by unanimously adopting a platform, from which I quote as follows:

"The men who abandoned the Republican party in 1884 and continue to adhere to the Democratic party, have deserted not only the cause of honest government, of sound finance, of freedom and purity of the ballot, but especially have deserted the cause of reform in the civil service. We will not fail to keep our pledges because they have broken theirs, or because their candidate has broken his. We therefore repeat our declaration of 1884, to wit: The reform of the civil service, auspiciously begun under the Republican Administration, should be completed by the further extension of the reform system, already established by law, to all the grades of the service to which it is applicable. The spirit and purpose of the reform should be observed in all executive appointments, and all laws at variance with the object of existing reform legislation should be repealed, to the end that the dangers to free institutions which lurk in the power of official patronage may be wisely and effectually avoided."

General Harrison, in his letter of acceptance, cordially

approved "the clear and forcible expression of the Convention upon this subject," advocating further legislation to include other branches of the service, and declaring his sincere purpose, if elected, to advance the reform. He was elected President in November, 1888, and the Republican party, having a majority in both houses of the 51st Congress, again became responsible for carrying on the reform.

President Harrison's first annual message, of December 3, 1889, discussed at length the operation of the Act and certain criticisms thereon, suggesting certain improvements and recommending appropriations for an increase in the clerical force. In his subsequent messages the subject was discussed in a like spirit. During his term of office 15,598 places were added to the classified service, 8,690 by his orders and the remainder by natural growth. In 1891 the merit system was also applied by General Tracy, Secretary of the Navy, to the employees of the Government Navy Yards, by an admirable and effective order, which removed more than 5,000 places from the sphere of politics. It should be remarked here, to the credit of the succeeding administration, that in 1893 this order was continued in force by Secretary Herbert, and President Cleveland's order of May 6, 1896, which greatly enlarged the classified service, brought these and many other places for the first time within the civil service rules.

That the Republican party had not changed its position was manifested by the action of the Republican National Convention in June, 1892, over which Wm. McKinley, Jr., presided, in nominating Benjamin Harrison for re-election, and unanimously adopting as part of its platform the following:

"We commend the spirit and evidence of reform in the Civil Service, and the wise and consistent enforcement by the Republican party of the laws regulating the same."

To this the Democratic National Convention, meeting a few days later, responded by again nominating Mr. Cleveland for President, upon a platform declaring that public office is a public trust, affirming former demands for the reform of the civil service, and calling for the honest enforcement of all laws regulating the same. So far as platforms and public pledges went there was nothing to



choose between the two great parties. In November, 1892, Mr. Cleveland was again elected President and the Democratic party once more became responsible for the reform. During his administration about 44,000 places were added to the classified service, including, however, the 5,000 Navy Yard employees affected by Secretary Tracy's order above mentioned, and 2,412 by natural growth.

At the date of the 13th annual report of the Civil Service Commission, January 30, 1897, the total approximate number of positions in the civil branch of the government, as stated in that report, was 178,717, of which 87,107 were in the classified service and 91,610 in the unclassified service; but of the number last mentioned about 5,500 are not classified, for reasons deemed best for the service, 4,800 are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, and nearly 8,900 are persons employed merely as laborers or workmen, leaving 72,371 places considered as classifiable but not yet classified, of whom 66,725 are Postmasters of the fourth class, who are appointed, and may be removed, by the Postmaster General. And this was in effect the status of the civil service in November, 1896, when both the great parties last went before the country, with the results already mentioned.

Well might the Republican candidate for the Presidency, in accepting his party's nomination for that great office, declare that its latest pledge was but in keeping with the position it had taken for the past twenty-four years. Each one of the six Republican National Conventions which during that period announced the party policy, emblazoned this reform upon its banner. Every President, whose candidacy was supported during that period by that party, urged upon Congress the necessity of the reform, and the legislation necessary to make it effective,—Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Arthur and Harrison. True it is that within the party lines, especially before 1883, were men whose reluctant support, still more their avowed hostility, obstructed the reform. But, as we have seen, while they could obstruct, they could not control the party: though, as we have also seen, their unfaithfulness to its pledges bred a popular distrust which brought it to disaster and defeat. "Sweet are the uses of adversity." The dis-



astrous rout of the Republican party at the polls in November, 1882, was swiftly followed by the enactment of the Pendleton bill, under a suspension of its rules by the Republican majority in a House in which, three months earlier, that bill was not deemed worthy of a Committee report.

It would seem incredible, alike on grounds of party sagacity, of fidelity to party pledges and to the honored leader who urges their fulfillment, and, I do not hesitate to add, of personal honor, that any Republican member of Congress should take part in repudiating the principles and policy of the Civil Service Act. And yet if the press reports are true, not only was the opening of the present session signalized by attacks upon the Civil Service Act,—not merely its methods and its administration, but the policy it embodies,—but later reports state that on the evening of the 11th, a conference of Republican members of the House was held for the purpose of securing changes in the Act, at which a Committee was appointed, with Mr. Grosvenor, of Ohio, as Chairman, who were instructed to examine the bills pending before the Civil Service Committee and report thereon: and that the expediency of attacking and opposing the civil service items in the pending appropriation bill was considered, though not determined on.

These statements await confirmation, and it would be premature to comment upon them now. If the assaults upon the merit system, so often defeated, are to be renewed, its friends in and out of Congress will be heard from at the proper time. They welcome every honest inquiry into its operation, for in the end the truth is sure to prevail. Indifference, not inquiry, reckless and false assertions, not sincere investigation, have been the obstacles to the reform.

But a certain interest attaches to such statements, in view of a speech made by Mr. Grosvenor, published in the Congressional Record of August 11, 1897, as part of the proceedings of the House on July 19th. It reads like one of those explosive and ephemeral contributions to political literature which, doubtless to the relief of the author, certainly to the comfort of his colleagues, from time to time find vent through the safety valve of a "leave to print." It contains many assertions of a kind familiar to the advocates of the merit system: assertions which—to continue the

simile — resemble the clouds and wreaths of vapor which escape from an overcharged boiler, not only in their noisy emergence, extreme tenuity and lack of propelling power, but in their sudden collapse and condensation into harmless drizzle when brought into contact with the pure cold atmosphere of truth.

For example, a letter of George Washington is quoted in which he declined to appoint to “*an office of consequence*” a man whose political tenets were adverse to the measures the general government were pursuing, because, in the judgment of Washington, he would thereby certainly be enabled to embarrass its movements — which “*would be a sort of political suicide.*” And then follows a denunciation of the Civil Service Act, as contrary to the views of Washington. In fact, that letter (Sparks’ Writings of Washington, Vol. XI, p. 74) expressly states that the office which Washington then had in mind was that of *Attorney General* — a Cabinet office, which neither the Civil Service Act nor any scheme of reform yet proposed has ever included. Why did not Mr. Grosvenor mention that fact? The answer to that question is obvious.

But the author of this essay, still speaking in Washington’s behalf, further assures us that—

— “*little did he ever dream that the hour would come in American history when the President would have been [sic] forced by law to yield the appointing power given him by the terms of the Constitution to a bureau independent of the President, whose orders, if he shall violate them, will lay him liable to indictment and impeachment.*”

Mr. Grosvenor, by profession at least, is a lawyer. Does he really imagine, or is he only trying to persuade his confiding constituents, that by any provision of the Civil Service Act the President’s appointing power *under the Constitution* is or can be in the slightest degree affected or impaired? There is not the least ground for asserting that any bureau or commission or officer under the Civil Service Act can issue any order which can possibly trench upon the President’s appointing power under the Constitution. Is he really ignorant that if that Act did contain any provision inconsistent with that power it would be simply void?

And how shall we reconcile this learned jurist's solicitude for the President's dignity with the following assertion, replete with adjectives, but quite ignoring the fact that every occupant of that office during the past twenty-four years has earnestly advocated the merit system?

"There has never been a cold, deliberate, dispassionate and candid or just argument made by these men why this law should be upheld and vindicated. They have never yet dared to touch the true test of the efficiency or inefficiency, the beneficent or non-beneficent character of the administration of this law in the United States."

This sentence follows an uncomplimentary reference to Mr. Logan Carlisle and to Mr. Procter, the present Chairman of the Civil Service Commission. It would probably amuse Mr. Logan Carlisle should he ever learn that Mr. Grosvenor had challenged him to defend the Civil Service Act. Mr. Procter, as we all know, has effectively vindicated it by reference to facts for the absence of which this essay is conspicuous. But the implication is clear that the law is not susceptible of a candid and just defense, and that no proof has been offered by any one, no test has been made, of its efficiency or its beneficent operation. In fact, after making the sneering charge that Mr. Jenckes, in 1867, "played to the public galleries," he ventures upon the assertion (I quote his words) —

"At that time Mr. Jenckes was challenged over and over again to bring forward any reason why such a law was to be passed. *He was never able to do it*, and finally, after his defeat, as above stated, he abandoned the field, so far as Washington and the Departments were concerned and undertook to try and reach inefficiency, as he called it, in the customs and internal revenue service."

This is history, as she is wrote — by Mr. Grosvenor. No one has told him, apparently, that President Grant and his successors, Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, Harrison and McKinley, have made some official declarations upon that subject. He has not, perhaps, had time to read the voluminous and cumulative testimony, year by year, of Cabinet officers,

heads of departments, collectors and postmasters in the great cities, gladly given in favor of the greatly increased efficiency and economy in the public service which this Act has produced. Yet the library of Congress is open to him.

But enough of these samples of statesmanship, culled from a few of the fifty-three closely printed columns devoted to the denunciation of that iniquitous and indefensible law. Still assuming that the press reports of the debate in the House on Tuesday of last week may be trusted, not the least significant feature of it, as reported, is the statement that Mr. Bailey of Texas, the leader of the Democratic party in the House, commended Mr. Grosvenor's utterances against building up an office-holding class in this country — "a doctrine,— he said,— which was almost literally embodied in the Chicago platform." One is distantly reminded of the Arabic proverb — though I should be far from applying it to any person so estimable as Mr. Bailey and his Democratic colleagues — "The blessings of the evil genii, which were curses, were upon him."

It has been the purpose of this paper to show the true relation of the Republican party to civil service reform, by setting forth the principles and policy to which it stands publicly pledged, as declared by the official representatives of that party. The record speaks for itself. The American people, who, in 1896, accepted the pledges of that party, will sit in judgment upon its fulfillment, or betrayal, of their trust.

# The Democratic Party and Civil Service Reform.

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BY MOORFIELD STOREY.

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It may properly be said that the Democratic Party is under a peculiar obligation to promote the reform of the civil service ; the obligation felt by every honorable man, to repair a wrong which he has done. It was the Democratic party under the lead of Andrew Jackson which first treated the public offices as plunder and which under him and his successors cherished the spoils system so lovingly as to make it a cardinal principle of our government. In thirty years it had become so well established that even President Lincoln in the midst of our civil war recognized its binding force. He could say in his despair, "I wish I had time to attend to the Southern question, but these office seekers demand all my time. I am like a man so busy letting rooms at one end of my house that I have not time to put out the fire which is burning in the other," but he could not escape from degrading bondage to the barbarous maxim, "To the victors belong the spoils."

It is not perhaps surprising that a party, devoted to the support of slavery as the Democratic party then was, did not clearly see how inconsistent with true Democratic principles was a system which made every officeholder a slave, whose acts, whose words and whose opinions, even, must be subject to the will of his patron and master. The slavery contest was in fact a war, in which, as in every war, God was forgotten. In the struggle to retain the control of the government the Democratic leaders used every weapon that opportunity offered, and did not stop to reconcile their practice too nicely with the traditional principles of their party. In the heat of that tremendous conflict the American people had no time to consider administrative reform.

When however the contest was over and the smoke of the battle had cleared away, the scandals of the spoils system, which like every other abuse had flourished amid the disorders

of war, forced themselves upon the public attention. The evils which had been tolerated under the first administration of General Grant had made men think, and many of the most earnest Republicans were beginning to waver in their allegiance to an organization, which seemed determined to ignore or condone the corrupting practices of party leaders.

The Democrats saw the weak point in the record of their opponents and sought to attract dissatisfied Republicans by espousing the cause of reform. The party needed new issues and new leaders, and it did not shrink even from the desperate step of nominating a life-long enemy, in the person of Horace Greeley, as its candidate for President.

The reform of the civil service was already commanding strong support. President Grant had commended it to the attention of Congress in his message of December 5th, 1870, and on March 3d, 1871, the first civil service reform law received his approval. The experiment had begun when the National Democratic Convention was held in 1872, and the Democratic party took an unequivocal position on the question. Its language was clear and distinct.

"The civil service of the Government has become a mere instrument of partisan tyranny and personal ambition and an object of selfish greed. It is a scandal and reproach upon free institutions and breeds a demoralization dangerous to the perpetuity of Republican government. We therefore regard a thorough reform of the civil service as one of the most pressing necessities of the hour."

This is strong language, but it only expressed the unanimous opinion of the American people at the time, if we may judge from platform professions, for the conventions of all parties made similar declarations. The spirit of independence was abroad in the land, and independent votes were in demand.

The result of the election in the autumn of 1872 gave the Democratic party no opportunity of proving its sincerity. The war was too recent. The Republicans retained power by an overwhelming majority, but used it so that in 1876 the people found themselves engaged in the most doubtful political contest which the country had known. The Democratic party selected as its candidate a Democrat and undertook in its platform to state the principles of the Democratic

party. Among these was included the reform of the civil service, and no party ever made a stronger and clearer declaration on this subject than the following statement, which is said to have been written by Mr. Tilden, then fresh from his victory over the spoils system in the City and State of New York.

"Reform is necessary in the civil service. Experience proves that efficient economical conduct of the governmental business is not possible, if its civil service be subject to change at every election, be a prize fought for at the ballot box, be a brief reward of party zeal instead of posts of honor, assigned for proved competency and held for fidelity in the public employ: that the dispensing of patronage should neither be a tax upon the time of all our public men nor the instrument of their ambition. . . . President, Vice-President, Judges, Senators, Representatives, Cabinet officers, these and all others in authority are the people's servants. Their offices are not a private perquisite: they are a public trust."

Taught perhaps by adversity, but with every prospect of power before it, the Democratic party returned to the principles of its founders. It recognized the great truth that the spoils system rests upon patronage, and that patronage is aristocratic and not democratic. No man should owe the privilege of serving his country to the favor of another. All are entitled to equal opportunities, and the country, another name for us all, is entitled to the best service. The equal rights of all and the greatest good of the greatest number, these are the corner stones of Democracy and of civil service reform. The Democratic party, freed from the blight of slavery, became again a great power in the nation when it re-asserted its fundamental principles in the language just quoted.

In 1880 the party in general language pledged itself "anew to the constitutional doctrines and traditions of the Democratic party, embodied in the platform of the National Convention of the party" including "a general and thorough reform of the civil service." This must be interpreted as reiterating the language which has been quoted from the earlier platform, though in itself less specific.

It is not, however, from party platforms that the purposes of a party are to be gathered. In the same year Mr. Pendle-

ton, of Ohio, a Democratic leader, introduced in the Senate of the United States "a bill to regulate and improve the civil service of the United States," which was referred to a select committee of the Senate. This bill was modelled upon the earlier measure of Mr. Jenckes, but before any action was taken upon it, a carefully framed bill prepared by several gentlemen who had the subject much at heart, among whom that early, devoted and unwavering friend of our cause, Mr. Dorman B. Eaton, was most active, was laid before Mr. Pendleton and by him readily accepted as a substitute for his own less perfect measure. This bill was reported by Mr. Pendleton on February 16th, 1881, and he presented with it an admirable report, in which he took the most advanced ground in favor of the reform.

This bill was not reached during the session, but he introduced it again and on December 13th, 1881, supported it with a powerful speech, closing with an appeal to his party associates, in which he said, "We are not in majority. We have no offices now. The chances of time will sooner or later put them in our grasp. Let us now declare that we will have none of their offices except those which may be won by merit, let us give this earnest of our sincerity in a great reform, let us give this token of the purity and patriotism of our coming administration of the government, let us convince the people, even our opponents, that we contend for power not that we may enjoy the emoluments of office, but that we may lead the country in the pathways of advancement and beneficence under the inspiration of a true democracy. The patronage, however pleasant for the moment, is a snare and a curse to any man or party."

Thus by a Democratic leader, in a speech which states the true principles of his party, was launched for a second time the great measure, which was to become the law of this country.

It was referred again to the committee and carefully considered. On May 15th, 1882, it was reported by Mr. Pendleton to the Senate with a recommendation that it pass, and the report which accompanied it contained a statement of evidence and facts, which was of the greatest value. The bill did not come up for a consideration during that session. The Republican party controlled the government and their President had urged the reform, but the House had refused to ap-



appropriate even the modest sum of \$25,000 for the support of the civil service commission, and only on the motion of Mr. Holman, a Democrat, appropriated \$15,000. This was the era of Jay Hubbell, and in this company I need say no more. The atmosphere of Congress when he was the chairman of the Republican Congressional Committee was not favorable to civil service reform.

The people, however, were not blind, and when Congress met again December, 1882, the Democratic party had swept the country. In many districts it was Republican hostility to civil service reform that defeated their candidates. Theodore Lyman in Massachusetts was elected on that issue and so were others, though less clearly. Congress understood the lesson. The session began on December 4th, 1882, and on the 12th Senator Pendleton brought his bill before the Senate, which entered upon its consideration with such diligence that on the 27th of December it passed the Senate by a vote of thirty-eight to five. The five were all Democrats, to their shame be it said, but the leaders of the party, Bayard, Pendleton, Lamar, Vest, Garland and even Gorman supported the bill, and that just after their triumph at the poll seemed to assure them the control of the offices in the near future.

The House was more expeditious. On January 4th the Senate bill was reported, and after thirty minutes' debate was passed by a vote of one hundred and fifty-five to forty-seven. Neither party was unanimous, but only a small minority of either was found to oppose the bill. This result conspicuously shows the salutary effect of defeat upon a party, and the lesson may well be taken to heart. Congressmen are quick to see what votes really mean, and out of many issues discussed they select with unerring accuracy the real cause of their defeat. The change of heart wrought by adversity was quick and complete. Even Jay Hubbell did not record his vote against the bill.

Such is the part which the Democratic party took in laying the foundation of the merit system. It was a Democrat who led the contest, he was supported by the leaders of his party, and it was a Democratic victory which persuaded Congress to pass the bill. The statute then enacted has since held its place, and every year has furnished fresh evidence that it was framed wisely.

Since the passage of this act the duty of carrying on the work by extending and perfecting the national system has devolved upon the executive. There is much that the legislature can still do, but to-day the pressure is rather to undo than to do. Our efforts are needed to hold the ground which we have won. The President now, as ever since the reform was inaugurated, is more enlightened than Congress.

It was in 1884 that, for the first time since civil service reform became a burning issue, a Democratic President was elected, and the party had an opportunity of proving the sincerity of its professions. The nomination of Grover Cleveland in itself pledged the party to civil service reform, for his record was known. He had signed the first State reform law. He had appointed an admirable commission headed by John Jay. He had seconded their efforts, and was thoroughly committed to the cause. The declarations in his letter of acceptance were full and explicit. I may perhaps quote a few sentences to remind you with what distinct promises the Democratic party returned to power.

"The selection and retention of subordinates in government employment should depend on their ascertained fitness and the value of their work, and they should neither be expected nor allowed to do questionable party service. The interest of the people will be better protected. The estimate of public labor and duty will be immensely improved. Public employment will be open to all who can demonstrate their fitness to enter it, . . . and the public departments will not be filled with those who conceive it their first duty to aid the party to which they owe their places, instead of rendering patient and honest return to the people."

Ante-election professions are notoriously unreliable. The ordinary politician accepts as a political axiom the remark of the eminent English statesman, "However much a party may gain by making promises, it always loses by fulfilling them." President Cleveland, however, took the earliest opportunity to renew in office the pledges he had made as a candidate. In his inaugural address he said with emphasis: "The people demand reform in the administration of the government and the application of business to public affairs. As a means to this end, civil service reform should be in good faith enforced. . . . Those who worthily seek public em-

ployment have the right to insist that merit and competency shall be recognized instead of party subserviency."

The President gave the most striking proof of his sincerity when at the very outset of his term he reappointed Henry G. Pearson as Postmaster of New York. We all remember how good men of every party hailed this act and how it excited the politicians, though as Mr. Schurz then said, "This is probably the only civilized country on the face of the globe where the reappointment of a very efficient capable public officer, regardless of political opinion, would be looked upon as anything extraordinary." Yet we must confess with shame that in this country it was an extraordinary thing, and it afforded us extraordinary pleasure, not only for itself, but because we thought we saw it in the determination to apply the true rule in all appointments.

The standard, however, was too high, not merely for Democrats, but for some civil service reformers. It was not long before the specious suggestion of dividing the offices equally between the two great parties began to find favor, as if the object of civil service reform was only to insure a fair division of spoils. Others urged that if an officer was allowed to serve out his term, it was quite right then to fill the office for political reasons, as if civil service reform meant only a gradual distribution of spoils,—a postponement of plunder. There seemed to many a crying injustice in perpetuating an official force from which Democrats for years had been carefully excluded, and the people were not sufficiently educated to understand the true faith. The Democratic party was not unselfish enough to find sound principle attractive, when it triumphed at its cost, and when the pertinacious efforts of spoilsmen were met in a spirit of compromise by the friends of reform, it is not perhaps surprising that the standard was lowered. The breach once made, it was hard to defend the fort. Within the classified service the rules were applied with reasonable fidelity, but other offices were filled with little regard to the principles of reform. I need only allude to the changes in the Postal Service and the Indian Service. Facts and figures might be given in tedious detail, but it is enough to quote the summing up of Mr. Curtis in his address to the National League on August 3, 1887, when he said:

"Practically there has been a very general partisan recon-

struction of the national civil service," and "It would be a great wrong to the cause of which the League is the authorized national representative if it did not plainly and emphatically declare that it does not regard the administration, however worthy of respect and confidence for many reasons, as in any strict sense of the words a civil service reform administration."

We cannot doubt that the President was entirely sincere in his promises of reform. He was a reformer by conviction, and his courage and strength of will were beyond question. That he failed so completely to realize his promises shows how great was the pressure and how slight the assistance which he got from the public. The education of the people was not complete.

But while he failed conspicuously to realize our hopes, he satisfied the Democratic party, which in its national platform of 1888 declared that "Honest reform in the civil service has been inaugurated and maintained by President Cleveland." This was a practical interpretation by politicians of Democratic promises.

Yet the President, while falling far short of our hopes, advanced the reform materially while in office. He found some fourteen thousand offices covered by the rules when he was inaugurated, and he extended the rules so as to add many more, including that important branch of the public service, the Railway Mail Service, and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. In all some thirteen thousand six hundred places were added to the classified service during his first term. He also, by ordering various investigations, made office-holders feel that the reform law was in active operation and that its provisions could not be neglected with impunity. During his term the civil service reformers were organized and militant, and public education progressed rapidly. Perhaps nothing helped to make men realize the hold which the spoils system had taken upon our people more than the fact that a man so courageous, so sincere and so strong as President Cleveland, had been overborne so completely by the pressure for office.

The Republican party, with the strongest professions in its platform and the most specific promises by its candidate, came into power, largely helped by the votes of civil service reformers, who had been disappointed by Mr. Cleveland and who turned with hope to Mr. Harrison. It is not for me, however

to record in this paper how far their hopes were realized. It is enough to say that when the next Presidential election came Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Harrison again led their respective parties.

Four years of adversity had quickened the zeal of the Democratic party for reform. Their declaration in national convention was distinct. "Public office is a public trust. We reaffirm the declaration of the Democratic National Convention of 1876 for the reform of the civil service," which was quoted, "and we call for the honest enforcement of all laws regulating the same." President Cleveland in his letter of acceptance commended "an honest adherence to the letter and spirit of civil service reform," and made other public declarations which gave reformers great reason for hope that his singularly independent position would enable a man of his high purpose and great courage to carry his principles into practice.

The loot of the consulships which immediately followed his return to power was a bitter disappointment. This, with the removals of fourth class postmasters and other departures from sound principle, excited indignant comment at the time, and nothing has occurred since to make us retract anything that was said in condemnation of the removals then made. We must not forget, however, that in his own time and in his own way President Cleveland showed his earnest purpose to advance the reform by extending the classified service almost to the possible limit. By his order of May 6, 1895, he placed under the civil service rules some 30,000 more positions, making the total of classified positions 87,098, and reducing the exempted places from over 2,000 to 775. This order also swept away many opportunities for abuse and made the entire code of rules much more simple and effective. No greater service to the cause of reform has been rendered by any President, and his party should remember that in doing what he did Mr. Cleveland simply fulfilled their promises, recognizing perhaps that the true Democratic party was the many million voters who made him President, and not the few thousand office seekers for whom no votes were cast. The impudence with which these pestilent persons assume that a battle upon great issues is fought only to provide them with salaries is amazing, but it is even more amazing that the real nature of their pretensions and their relative unimportance are not seen more clearly by intelligent men.

Nor was this all. During the same administration Postmaster-General Wilson put into operation the best scheme that has yet been devised for extending the merit system to the fourth class offices,—the gradual consolidation of neighboring offices by making them stations of a central office. This change, which increased efficiency and diminished expense, was too serious a blow at the patronage of Senators and it was accordingly prohibited by law. One Democratic spoilsman who was prominent in the work has lost his re-election and he perhaps now recognizes that to the civil service reformers whom he has long contemned, his defeat is in great part due. We may well tender to our friends in Maryland our congratulations upon a victory which crowns one of the most determined and persistent struggles that our movement has seen.

And so if, at the end of May 1896, we had taken a retrospective view of our struggle, we should have seen the Democratic party as soon as it recovered from the strain of the war pledging itself to civil service reform. We should have seen the present law introduced and championed by a Democratic statesman with the support of his party's leaders. We should have found in a Democratic victory the impulse which carried it through Congress, and we should have seen the system which the law established carried to its highest development by a Democratic President. We should have seen that at every step in its progress Democratic "Bosses" and Democratic office-seekers have opposed reform as much as they dared, and that their concentrated and persistent efforts had proved so powerful as to make a Democratic President concede much that his party's promises forbade. None the less these influences had not availed to change the position of the party as a whole. Whenever it met in National Convention it had reaffirmed more or less clearly its allegiance to the reform, which had by repeated declarations become firmly established as a cardinal article of Democratic faith.

A few weeks later the situation changed, and the Democratic organization turned its back upon the leaders who had carried it to victory, and renounced the essential principles of Democracy which are the source of its marvellous vitality. Among other great Democratic causes which it abandoned was the cause of civil service reform. The declaration of the Democratic Convention of 1896 was a model of that perverted

dexterity which is able to "keep the word of promise to our ear but break it to our hope." This is the language :

"We are opposed to life tenure in the public service. We favor appointments based upon merit, fixed terms of office, and such an administration of the civil service laws as will afford equal opportunities to all citizens of ascertained fitness."

This may seem to promise reform but the first sentence is the key to its true meaning. There is no life tenure, and this attempt to mislead is in keeping with the demagoguery of the whole Bryan movement, which brought the Democratic party to defeat at the polls, as overwhelming as it was richly deserved.

But even then men were found who, without hope of political preferment, held to the faith and rallied round the standard of true Democracy. These men made at Indianapolis the strongest declaration of devotion to our cause and their sincerity is doubted by no one. They stand to-day the only representatives of the true Democratic party.

From this retrospect it appears, and perhaps the lesson is worth teaching, that the strength of the Democratic party at the polls has increased and decreased with its support of reform. When it has taken the highest ground on this question, it has won. When it has receded or faltered, it has lost. While there was in the country a strong body of voters, not tied by partisan feeling to either organization, but considering only the welfare of the country, their votes were the prize for which each party bid. A distinct declaration in favor of civil service reform was necessary to win their support. Each party *out* of office, and seeking to regain it, has been willing to promise more than the same party *in* office and expecting to retain it. The disappointed office seekers of a Presidential term have had influence enough in the next national convention of their party to lower the standard. When this surrender of public interests to private demands has been followed by defeat, the standard rises again.

The activity of Republican spoilsmen to-day is readily explained by the disorganization of the compact force which has stood for reform so long. With the Democratic party committed to the spoils and to heresy of every kind, the Republicans feel that no reform voter can support a Democratic candidate. Believing that the votes of reformers are secure, Re-

publican politicians feel it safe to take a little risk of disgusting them for the sake of reviving the good old days when every Congressman was a patron, who could buy his election with the money of the people, ostensibly spent for the public service, but really to pay for personal support. If we would influence either party, we must still stand a compact body, ready to vote for either which will best help our cause, or better still form a new party, organized to promote by active work what we have at heart. The practice of Hobson's choice, the election between two evils, has gone too far. Let us hope for a party which will give us a positive good.

The real feeling of the two parties can best be judged in the States where each has undisputed sway. If this field is examined, it will be found that in proportion as their power is unquestioned, their zeal for civil service reform has languished. Men who are in earnest use their power to accomplish their real ends, and the failure to use established power in our cause shows that the earnest purpose is lacking. Those of us who have enlisted for the war must stand together, must increase our efforts, must rally to our banner new recruits and must become an organized force, which both parties will fear. The organization of the Gold Democrats is heartily with us, and where independent action is needed we can unite our force with theirs; but the lesson of our whole movement, the lesson which Grosvenor and Gallinger are teaching us to-day is that our strength lies in independence, and that unwavering allegiance to either party is inconsistent with true devotion to civil service reform.

To the Democratic party we may commend the study of their own history. They will find that their principles, their consistent declarations for twenty-five years, and the teachings of their great leaders all support our cause, and that the spoils system is undemocratic. They will find that when they have been strongest in their support of reform, they have been strongest in the country, and that as they have faltered, they have lost ground. Wherever civil service reformers have been strong they have been prompt to punish any treachery to their cause. The party must return to Democratic principles, if it is ever again to be trusted with power, and it must abandon a course which drives from its ranks the men who have led it to victory. Whenever it is ready in all sincerity to say again



with Pendleton, "We contend for power, not that we may enjoy the emoluments of office, but that we may lead the country in the pathways of advancement and beneficence under the inspiration of a true Democracy," nothing can keep it from the lasting control of the government. Till then it deserves and will meet only defeat.

# Do the American People want Civil Service Reform ?

BY CHARLES J. BONAPARTE.

My attention was called some three or four weeks since to a letter addressed to the President by a Mr. J. L. Kennedy\* of the "Anti-Civil Service League" (a gentleman of whom my own obscurity had doubtless prevented my hearing sooner), in which occurred the following passage :

" There is not one grain of comfort for the civil-service reformers in the late elections. Look at Maryland ! The Legislature of the State submitted a proposed constitutional amendment to the people to be voted on at the recent election. It proposed to erect a State civil-service establishment, patterned after the National Civil Service Commission. As an issue in the campaign, it, like all others, was subordinated to the greater one, which Mr. Gorman's personality brought into the canvass. Nevertheless, the people kept it in mind, and had their eyes on it when they went into the booths to mark their ballots. A Baltimore Republican of some fame, who was in the city Saturday, informed me that the proposed amendment was buried under an adverse majority of 75,000, and that it did not carry in a single county in the State. This, too, notwithstanding the fact there is a strong civil service reform organization in Baltimore, the leading spirit of which is Colonel Charles Napoleon Bonaparte."

Upon the interesting information thus vouchsafed the President by Mr. Kennedy and the "Baltimore Republican of some fame," the Washington correspondent of the *Philadelphia Star*, to whom I should say, I am indebted for knowledge of the measure of "fame" so accorded to myself, comments as follows :

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\*Since this paper was first published I have had some correspondence with Mr. Kennedy : he denies that he belongs to the Anti-Civil-Service League or that he wrote any letter to the President, and says the words I quoted were "exultant remarks" contained in an interview published in the Washington "Post." I congratulate Mr. Kennedy on thus avoiding disreputable associates and refraining from an exhibition of ridiculous presumption ; my authority for both statements was, as I say above, the Washington correspondent of the Philadelphia "Evening Star," whom he calls "Honorable James Rankin Young." I have no acquaintance with this "honorable" person.

"Col. Bonaparte and his confreres were strong enough to go to the Legislature of Maryland and have such a proposed amendment submitted to the electorate; but they were very weak with the people. It is always thus with the civil-service reformers. They can go before small bodies like Legislatures and conventions, and exert an influence, as Senator Lodge and a few others of them did in St. Louis, when they had a mugwump plank inserted in a Republican platform, but they have little influence with the people."

In point of accuracy these statements rival the well-known definition of a crab mildly criticized by Cuvier. His colleagues of the Academy having described the animal as "a little red fish that walks backwards," his only comments were that it "wasn't a fish, wasn't red and didn't walk backwards." The suggested amendment did *not* "propose to erect a State Civil Service establishment patterned after the National Civil Service Commission," or propose to erect a "State Civil Service establishment" of any sort, kind or description whatsoever. My "confreres" and I were *not* "strong enough to go to the Legislature and have such an amendment submitted to the electorate;" the bill which they and I *did* ask that body to pass it refused to make law, and I did everything in my power to prevent the enactment of the measure actually adopted. In this matter I was most emphatically *not* the "leading spirit" of the "Civil Service Reform organization in Baltimore," for I retired from its presidency a few weeks after the act had been passed because it would not be "led" by me into openly repudiating the proposed amendment. Whatever may be my "weakness" or however "little" my "influence" with the people of my native State, the result of this particular election certainly did not tend to show such weakness or lack of influence, for as I voted on the amendment so voted an overwhelming majority of my fellow citizens. Finally, my middle name is not "Napoleon" and I am not, and have never been, a "Colonel" or a soldier at all.

A very eloquent and plausible preacher of my acquaintance, when privately questioned as to effective, but rather sweeping, statements in his sermons, had the habit of saying: "Now don't let's be too accurate." In this respect (but, it is fair to say of him, in no other) he would have been well qualified for membership in the "National Anti-Civil Service League." The editor of "City and State" said recently of that great body:

“By the way, we desire to inquire of those distinguished gentlemen, Mr. Grosvenor and the rest, why they call their organization by the name which indicates the very opposite of their purpose? They are *Anti-Civil Service Reform*, but surely not *Anti-Civil Service*. It cannot really be their wish to abolish *the service* which contains all the offices and the salaries these gentlemen are so keen after. How could the League possibly exist if it succeeded in gaining its ostensible purpose,—the abolition of the Civil Service of the United States?”

I cannot, for once, agree with our good friend of “City and State” as to this. Macaulay was probably mistaken in saying:

“A man who has never been within the tropics does not know what a thunderstorm means; a man who has never looked on Niagara has but a faint idea of a cataract; and he who has not read Barere’s Memoirs may be said not to know what it is to lie.”

Probably “those distinguished gentlemen, Mr. Grosvenor and the rest,” have not, for the most part, read Barere’s Memoirs; I believe these have only recently been translated and it is likely that few of them have had leisure for foreign literature. For some reasons this may be regretted; they would doubtless read with sympathetic pleasure of Barere’s sentiments and actions; it might be hard to find any more commendable if tested by their standards of morality and honor; but for the particular purpose indicated by Macaulay they have no need to read these Memoirs or anything else; however imperfect it may be otherwise, in this respect their education is complete: they may be ignorant of many things, but certainly they cannot “be said not to know what it is to lie.” If, therefore, the title chosen for their association embodied a lie, I at least should regard this as in every way appropriate.

But I do not think it does: on the contrary, in choosing their name, they seem to me (for once only and, of course, unwittingly) to have told the truth. These men would convert the public Service of the United States into an asylum for political bums, they would have the Federal offices throughout the country serve as currency wherewith politicians may pay their debts and their bribes; they would see official salaries once more taxed to pay real and pretended, legitimate, and illegitimate campaign expenses, and the departments at Washington again crowded with men who had known how to make themselves useful, with women who had known how to make

themselves agreeable, to Senators and Representatives. Entertaining these purposes, it is, to my mind, eminently fitting that they should proclaim as their end "the abolition of the Civil Service of the United States:" for they would indeed abolish everything in that service worthy of a civilized and Christian Nation.

If, however, these ornaments to our politics told the truth on this occasion, their so doing was beyond question a pure accident, and wholly without precedent on their part, nor have they subsequently given the public the slightest reason to doubt their unfaltering and boundless confidence in the adhesive qualities of unadulterated mendacity: to furnish another illustration of this attractive trait, whether displayed by Mr. Kennedy or by his friend of the *Star*, would scarcely justify a trespass on the limited time of the League; but their reckless talk, as above given, suggests two enquiries of real interest and to which very different men have anxiously sought and still seek answers reassuring as to the future of popular government. Is it true that honorable and disinterested men, for, whatever I may be, such men are my "confreres" among the reformers of Maryland, "can exert an influence before small bodies like Legislatures and Conventions," but "have little influence," are "very weak" with "the people?" Is it true that "there is not one grain of comfort for the Civil Service Reformers in the late elections?" or rather that these elections or any other events in our recent history show or suggest that the American people do not want Civil Service Reform?

I will answer the first question from experience, from the experience of the very men to whom the sages of "Anti-Civil Service" refer as my "confreres." Since they formed themselves in 1885 into the Baltimore Reform League they have thrice appealed to the people; in each one of these cases they, or those in sympathy with their purposes, had previously attempted to "exert an influence" on "small bodies" of politicians or public officials to the same end. In 1885 and 1886 they laid before a Democratic President and Secretary of the Interior and afterwards before a Republican Senate overwhelming and practically undisputed proofs of the unfitness for the public employment of a man nominated as Inspector of Indian Agencies, but before these "small" (*very* small) "bodies" they were indeed "very weak." But in 1888, when,

emboldened by his "vindication," and perhaps yet more by the prevailing partisan excitement, inseparable from a Presidential campaign, he offered himself as a candidate for an elective local office, though he secured an enthusiastic "endorsement" from another "small body," *i. e.*, the Democratic City Convention, and though his party carried both the City and State, the Reform League was strong enough, had sufficient "influence with the people," to defeat him and defeat him so thoroughly and significantly that since then he has well nigh disappeared from notice in our politics. In 1891 certain of my "confreres" with the help of some other gentlemen who would perhaps disclaim the title, not having yet outgrown a youthful belief in the possibility of "reform within the party," attempted to prevent the continuances in his office of State's Attorney of another man, personally far more estimable, but whose official course had provoked grave and authoritative censure, by remonstrances addressed to the leading politicians of his and their common party then dominant. I have narrated elsewhere the suggestive and ludicrous incidents of this very well meant but very ill-judged effort to "exert an influence" for good on a "small body," made up of the Supreme Boss and his lieutenants; its outcome was a complete and ridiculous failure. Three years later, however, when the same influences which had kept the State's Attorney in his office of public prosecutor secured his nomination as Judge, the "weakness" of the Reform League "with the people" was again tested through its earnest public protest against his election; and again these weaklings in popular favor proved strong enough to administer a decisive defeat to the highly "practical" politicians who had derided their warnings. Some six months since the same feeble organization exposed and censured grave abuses in the office of the Clerk of our Criminal Court, whereby the acceptance of "straw-bail" had become a frequent incident in prosecutions for certain offences. A "small body" of twenty-three men, that is to say, the Grand Jury then serving in that Court, or, to speak more accurately, a still "smaller body" of uncertain number, constituting a majority of the twenty-three, cheerfully accorded the incriminated official a comfortable coat of whitewash, and another "small body," the City Convention of his party, promptly renominated him for the office

he so worthily held and which would be filled by the people in November. The Reform League accepted the challenge, and we have a new Clerk at the Criminal Court.

I have cited facts in the history of Baltimore as an answer to the first question, not because the experience of that City in this respect has been exceptionally significant or striking, but because the newspaper correspondent whose words I quoted selected my "confreres" and myself as types of the class he believed to be "weak" and destitute of "influence" with "the people." Innumerable illustrations of the falsehood and even absurdity of his statement could be furnished from almost every part of the Union. It has been demonstrated everywhere, and again and again, that "with the people" the advocates of good government are strong; that with politicians, whether in or out of office, they are pitifully weak. This is not only because the practical and thoroughgoing application of their principles to the conduct of public business would oblige our professional officeholders and office seekers of high and low degree to starve or change their calling and that neither prospect pleases: in truth, an American politician of to-day lives in so dense and unwholesome a moral atmosphere, his views on all questions of conscience or honor are so false and distorted, that he can hardly conceive of a party, or a political organization of any kind, with other ends than to secure support at public expense for as many as possible of its members; that citizens should combine for any other purpose seems to him visionary and absurd. To his mind a political party is kept up for purposes as strictly interested as a railroad or life insurance company: the sentiments of its platform mean no more than the devotion to the public to be found in the prospectus of the former, or the longing to care for the widow and orphan professed in the circulars of the latter; they are advertisements and nothing more; and he openly or secretly believes the "fine talk" of avowed reformers to be, what it would be if uttered by him or his like, mere sham and cant. It is when we break out from this dismal malarial fog of paltry passions and vulgar selfishness into the broad life-giving sunlight of our orderly freedom that we find among Americans, men who yet love justice and hate iniquity.

To answer satisfactorily the second question, we must first state it clearly; in other words, to decide whether the Ameri-

can people want Civil Service Reform, we must understand what is meant by "the American people" and what is meant by "Civil Service Reform," and this is the more needful because there is no little confusion of thought and language, partly wilful but in great part also stupid and careless, as to both subjects. Within the delivery of every faithful and competent letter carrier in the country there could doubtless be found to-day fifty bummers of his own party and as many of the other who would see him removed with delight if through his removal each of them might hope, immediately or at the next turn of the political wheel, for a chance to loaf in his place at the taxpayer's cost: there could also be found a thousand or more men and women, of all shades of political opinion, ready to protest against a change which might turn over their mail to the tender mercies of a rowdy or a drunkard or, at best, a greenhorn. Now when President McKinley says that the people are friendly to Civil Service Reform, he is thinking of the thousand respectable citizens who, in every such district, are quietly attending to their legitimate business; when Gallinger and Grosvenor and *their* "confreres" talk of the people as hostile to Civil Service Reform, they are thinking (at least, it is charitable to suppose that they may perhaps be thinking) of the hundred political mendicants within the same space who are clamoring or whining for "recognition," and who, if tenfold less numerous, are a hundredfold more noisy and obtrusive than their decent and busy fellow countrymen. Indeed, although judging them by their records, there is a fair enough presumption that any allegation of fact made by one of these eminent persons is a deliberate falsehood, it is not improbable that, in thus defaming the people, they may enjoy the sensation, which must have all the charm of novelty, of believing themselves to speak the truth. A well known French statesman was said to be so thoroughly in sympathy with the public sentiment of his country that, to know what France thought on any subject, he had only to ask himself what he thought about it: few of us may have as good grounds as he had to claim that, as we think so think the people, but in conjecturing the thoughts of that vast mass of humanity which we so name, every one, more or less consciously, generalizes from his own opinions and wishes and those of the men among whom he lives, with whom he is



brought into hourly contact. These men are themselves professional politicians; they live surrounded by other professional politicians and when they speak or think of "the people's" wishes, sentiments and opinions, they really mean their own wishes, sentiments and opinions and those of their fellows in the craft. Do then the views of American politicians fairly reflect the views of the American people? That we may judge, let us further ask what manner of men are they and how do they live?

The typical American politician, as developed by the spoils system of politics, earns his living by holding, when he can get it, a public office (usually of subordinate importance and purely ministerial functions) in return for past or expected party work. He is liable at any moment to be thrown out of employment for no other fault than being less useful to his party, or faction or special patron than some one else who wants his place, and his chance of promotion depends on his ability to supplant in like manner somebody else; in no legitimate way can he ensure himself and his family a continued subsistence, much less make a provision for the future: that he should be usually dishonest is a logical sequence of his conditions of life. He passes his time in an atmosphere of intrigue and dissimulation, concealing or exaggerating his sentiments, amplifying his importance, striving to arouse hopes and fears he knows to be groundless, and to gain a confidence he will be strongly tempted to abuse: it is therefore a law of his being to deceive in words and actions. He is regarded by the community, and especially by the classes who usually fix its standards of thought and conduct, much as usurers were in the Middle Ages, feared and occasionally courted for their power, but hated and despised. Although fortunes are no doubt made in it, politics regarded as a way to make money, is, after all, a poor trade: the proportion of really prosperous politicians is very small compared with the vast number for whom a needy and anxious life ends in a dishonored and miserable old age. It has consequently few attractions for men of character and ability, and such men, with rare exceptions, shun it: it is recruited from the failures and outcasts of all honorable professions, those too dull, indolent or vicious to hold their own in any field of worthy competition. Its low-

est stratum is made up in no small measure of habitual criminals: we may truly say that our Botany Bay is the political arena. Among so many thousands a certain number of men of ability will, of course, be found, but I believe the very general impression that politicians are usually acute and ingenious, though untrustworthy, is wholly groundless; the vast majority of them are men of the most moderate natural abilities, and the most limited acquirements. The relations between the prominent and the ordinary members of this calling closely resemble those between the robber barons and their men-at-arms: the "bosses" are noted for skill in obtaining plunder and liberality in its distribution among their followers; while the latter believe in their patron's star, that is to say, feel confidence in his continued ability to find them places, they adhere to him with unscrupulous fidelity, but he will be deserted in an instant if another proves, or is thought, better able to reward effective service at the people's cost. With little exaggeration it may be said that our professional politicians constitute that class of the community which is universally and unhesitatingly pronounced the least worthy of confidence in any of the relations of private life.

It follows that, not only have they no special aptitude to gauge public opinion, but they are peculiarly clumsy and unlucky in their efforts to forecast a public verdict. The blunders made by American politicians of more or less prominence as to the results of impending elections have been so gross and frequent of late years as to seem at once incredible and incomprehensible to observers who know public men in other countries or who knew our public men in other days. Innumerable instances of these blunders could be furnished: I will give three from my personal experience. In October, 1892, I was opposed in a case at our Court of Appeals to a lawyer, better known as an active Democratic politician than professionally. On the way to Annapolis he shook his head sadly over Cleveland's prospects: the latter's nomination "had been a great mistake;" he "had no strength with the people;" his defeat "was certain;" the discourse was a perfect jeremiad. Two years later, under very similar circumstances, I was favored by a Republican lawyer, a member of the Committee in charge of the campaign then in progress, and himself very active in its management, with prognostica-

tions as to the outcome. "It will go against us, as it always does in Maryland. They will elect their Congressmen and their Judge, and take everything else in sight; but I don't believe they'll get any fancy majorities." His views were not, indeed, of a tint so nearly indigo as those of his brother across the way had been, but he was no less incapable of seeing the prodigious turn in the tide, than had been the latter to feel the great wave of popular favor which was sweeping Mr. Cleveland a second time into the White House. Two years yet later another very prominent Republican politician actually trembled when he told of the likelihood that Bryan would be elected, and said, as for Maryland the only hope was in rolling up (just how, he didn't say clearly) such a majority in Baltimore City as might swamp the inevitable hostile majorities in every rural district of the State. When I told him I considered Bryan already beaten in the country and particularly badly beaten in our State, and that I believed the farmers, in Maryland at least, were in favor of sound money, he thought I did not know much about politics: what he thought a few days later when the papers told him McKinley had eleven thousand plurality in Maryland outside of Baltimore City and carried twenty-one counties out of twenty-six, I never cared to enquire.

But surely there has been no more striking exhibition of blindness as to indications of popular sentiment, than when Mr. Kennedy referred the President to the results of the election just held to show, in substance, that the Republican party might safely and profitably repudiate what his friend the correspondent calls "the Mugwump plank" in its National platform. That plank was in the words following:

"The Civil Service law was placed on the statute book by the Republican party, which has always sustained it, and we renew our repeated declarations that it shall be thoroughly and honestly enforced and extended wherever practicable."

Both of these "honorable men," and all the other "honorable men" confederated with them to obtain the laudable ends of the "Anti-Civil Service League," proclaim that in the "repeated declarations" which their party thus "renewed," it simply displayed the most barefaced hypocrisy; that its intentions, or at least those of its leaders and candidates were precisely the contrary of those it thus explicitly avowed. The

morality of such professions combined with such purposes,—how far such a party would deserve, how long it could hope to retain, the allegiance of any honest man, I need not here discuss; for, after all, the sentiments and conduct of honest men must be matters both unfamiliar and indifferent to the “Anti-Civil Service League.” Its shining lights, however, may be more interested to know and better able to discuss how far this hypocrisy (if such it was) has paid, and whether, as some of them seem to think, the time has now come when the party can throw off its supposed mask with impunity. Experiments in that line have, indeed, been tried; let us note their results.

In this State, the Republican party, standing on its “Mugwump plank” and presenting as its candidate for the Presidency a citizen of Ohio who had always spoken and voted as though he believed in that plank and thought his party sincere in its adoption, obtained last year nearly 50,000 plurality. This year its State Convention improved on the National platform to the following effect:

“We denounce the violation of the spirit of the Civil Service Act by President Cleveland, and those orders which extended its operation beyond its purpose and intent. We demand such revocation of orders or modification of the law as will accomplish its manifest purpose.”

Will Mr. Kennedy or the *Star's* correspondent or that great apostle of their common cause, Mr. Grosvenor, tell us what addition has been made by this change of front to the 50,000 plurality? And, by the way, since I am so near the home of that illustrious man, may I ask his admiring neighbors whether his campaign against Civil Service Reform has strengthened or weakened the Republican party in his own district?

Across the river to the South, the doctrine of the “Mugwump plank” was this year diluted to the strength indicated by the following formula:

“The Republican party is pledged to wise and just civil service, but is opposed to the unwise and partisan civil service of the late Democratic administration, and will ask for a modification of the civil service laws of President Cleveland. We believe that this should be done in order to protect the rights and interests of the American people.”

Kentucky's electoral vote was cast for McKinley, but this year it went Democratic by seventeen thousand, or, more accurately, if we add the vote cast for the Sound Money Demo-

crat nominated for Clerk of the Court of Appeals, by over twenty-six thousand majority.

The Republican State Convention of Pennsylvania went farther yet. It had this to say about Civil Service Reform:

"We adhere to and renew again the pledges of the Republican party to maintain a just, reasonable and equitable system of civil service, but we denounce President Cleveland for his partisan abuse of its powers and his manipulation and unjust extension of its provisions beyond that which was originally contemplated by the law or required in the interest of good government, so as to protect the unfit appointees from his own party from threatening non-partisan competition.

By his violation of the spirit and intent of the law the offices of the Federal government have been filled with representatives of a single party; the standard of efficiency has been degraded; veterans of the late war have been dismissed to make place for political favorites without just or reasonable cause; promotions and transfers have been made for partisan reasons, regardless of merit and in disregard of the spirit of the Civil Service Law.

With an earnest desire to sustain the principles of the law and secure an honest, economical and efficient administration of the affairs of the government, we demand that the President of the United States, by executive order, and Congress, by legislative enactment at the approaching session, shall establish a Civil Service system that shall meet the approval of the better judgment and common sense of the American people."

Apparently, the "Civil Service system" established under that law which the National Convention said "shall be thoroughly and honestly enforced and extended wherever practicable," already met "the approval of the better judgment and common sense of the American people," for the suggestion that it be changed, reduced Mr. Beacom's plurality as State Treasurer to less than 130,000 from over 300,000 for McKinley and converted the latter's majority of 262,000 into 10,000 minority.

In New York the Republican platform contained no reference to Civil Service Reform, and none was needed: Senator Platt and Governor Black and Chairman Quigg were in themselves a platform as to this question, indeed as to any question of decency and good morals among public men. Its eloquent silence, however, was no less effective than the utterances in other States of statesmen recognizing the like principles and standards as those models: it availed to transform a Republican plurality of 268,000 into a Democratic plurality of 61,000 and we should be unreasonable if we asked more.

Mr. Kennedy, however, bids the President "Look at

Maryland!" Well, let him look. He will see that with his "Mugwump plank" and his record as a friend to Civil Service Reform, he carried Maryland by over thirty-two thousand plurality, and that this year, when the Republican Convention, like that of New York, said nothing on the subject, an exceptionally strong candidate was elected Comptroller by barely eight thousand. If he can and will look a little below the surface of our recent history, he will see further that only the fact that, in the language of Mr. Kennedy, all other issues "were subordinated to the greater one which Mr. Gorman's personality brought into the canvass" enabled the Republicans to carry Maryland at all. Senator Gorman is entitled to their thanks for another Republican legislature at Annapolis, for another Republican City government in Baltimore: heavily as they were handicapped by their own follies, he, this noted enemy of Civil Service Reform, fatally overweighted his own party.

I know well that these features of the result in Maryland were not those at which Mr. Kennedy invited the President to "look:" it may be safely assumed that when one of his stamp asks a public officer to look at anything, he means that the latter shall look with one eye shut, shall see what is pointed out to him and see no more. Since I do not propose to imitate such people as Mr. Kennedy, in this respect or any other, I will deal with the matter to which he specially refers, and deal with it frankly. It is true that the politicians who controlled the last General Assembly submitted to the voters of Maryland an amendment to the State Constitution which they called a "Civil Service Reform," or more usually (and, in this instance, more accurately) a "Civil Service," *without* "Reform," amendment: it is also true that the voters at the late election rejected this amendment by a very great majority. To this majority I personally contributed one vote, and, on the day after election, I said for publication:

"I expected its defeat and thought, and now think, as I showed by my vote, that it deserved defeat. Its rejection shows that the people of Maryland know the difference between a real and a humbug merit system, and are not going to vote for the latter because called by the name of the former."

Did I thus state fairly the significance of this popular vote?

The amendment submitted read as follows:

" Appointments in the civil service of the State in the municipalities and counties of the State, shall be made according to merit and fitness, to be ascertained so far as practicable by examination, which shall be competitive, except appointments which are subject to confirmation by the Senate, and the General Assembly shall pass all such laws as may be necessary more fully to carry into effect the provisions of this section."

It was offered in pretended satisfaction of the following promise made by the party's last preceding State Convention :

" We pledge ourselves to the enactment of such legislation as shall permit the people of the several counties and the municipalities of this State to decide for themselves by popular vote whether appointments to the police, fire or other departments of public service shall be in accordance with the principles of the merit system."

That the submission of the amendment in no wise fulfilled the pledge must be obvious to the most careless reader: evidently the people of Baltimore City, for instance, were not thereby "*enabled to decide for themselves* by popular vote" whether partisan or personal favoritism should be banished in the choice of their public servants, without regard to the opinions or wishes of the people of Frederick or Elkton, Westminster or Annapolis or the more remote Counties of the State. But a more careful reading of the amendment discloses more. An officer of the State *located within* the territory of a municipal or other public corporation is no more an officer *of* that corporation than a Federal officer so located would be: therefore *all* County or Municipal officers and employees, the very classes mentioned in the platform, were excluded from its operation; it could apply only to persons strictly in the employ of the State. And, if we examine it yet more closely, we shall see that, if adopted, it would have affected the selection of very few among these, perhaps of none at all. To the words "in the Municipalities and Counties of the State," however obscure and *apparently* artificial the phrase may be, *some* meaning must be given, and the only intelligible meaning which can be given them, further limits the scope of the provision to such civil servants of the State as are necessarily confined in the discharge of their public duties to the territory of some particular County or Municipality. This would have certainly left out two branches of "the Civil Service of the State" to whose selection the merit system might be applied with the greatest facility and benefit, namely, the Oyster Police and the employees of the Tobacco Warehouses. Of the former, the same

convention had said in the very next plank of its platform :

“ We condemn the partisan management of the Oyster police force of this State.”

Among the latter the Governor has been since obliged to dismiss several of his own appointees, after an investigation which disclosed the existence of grave abuses, undoubtedly of long standing. These branches of the public service would have been excluded from the protection afforded by the amendment, if adopted: to what offices would it have extended? This question no one has been able to answer with any certainty; when, after these exclusions, we further leave out all civil officers of the State either confirmed by the Senate or elected by the people, and also those whose choice by competitive examination would be impracticable, the residuum is almost one of those “least things whereof the law takes no heed.”

The bill submitting this amendment to the people was originally introduced in the House of Delegates by an enemy to Civil Service Reform as bitter as Gallinger or Grosvenor or any member of the “Anti-Civil Service League,” and, whatever may have been, in fact, its genesis, no one of these worthies could have suggested a more cynical evasion of party pledges, or have proffered to the friends of good government a test of strength, in all outward appearance, more impudently devised upon the time-honored principle of “heads I win, tails you lose.”

I called the possible fruit of this measure a “humbug merit system;” it remains for me to define the genuine article, and I deem this the more material because I think whatever reasonable doubt may exist as to whether the American people want Civil Service Reform arises from some difference of opinion or rather some confusion of thought as to what Civil Service Reform means.

Civil Service Reform means simply the application of morality and common sense to the choice of public servants. A public office belongs to the people; its duties are fixed by the people’s laws; its salary is paid with the people’s money. In the words of the Court of last resort in my State :

“ In this country a public office cannot be the property of the incumbent, because it belongs to the sovereign people who created the government. In the declaration of organic principles, prefixed to the instrument creating the government of this State, those holding the most



important offices are declared to be 'the trustees of the public.' The same designation necessarily applies to all public functionaries. Therefore, every office, created either by the Constitution or by the laws authorized by that instrument, is a public trust created for the public benefit."

It follows logically that if a President or Governor or Mayor uses the patronage which he holds in trust for the Union or his State or his City to strengthen himself in his faction, or his faction in his party, or his party at the polls, his conduct is indistinguishable in morals from a guardian's who would use his ward's money in his own business or in the business of some firm or corporation of which he is a member. It is not enough that he may not choose unfit subordinates; but he must choose them *solely* because of their fitness; if he allow any other consideration whatever to influence his choice he is *pro tanto* unmindful of the duty which he has promised, nay sworn, to perform. In words thus much is admitted by everyone: even Governor Black would have civil servants chosen for "merit and fitness" of some sort. Moreover, the great mass of the American people see clearly enough that political opinion no more affects the merit or fitness of an applicant for a non-political office than does his religious faith. Macaulay says:

"The points of difference between Christianity and Judaism have very much to do with a man's fitness to be a bishop or a rabbi. But they have no more to do with his fitness to be a magistrate, a legislator, or a minister of finance, than with his fitness to be a cobbler. Nobody has ever thought of compelling cobblers to make any declaration on the true faith of a Christian. Any man would rather have his shoes mended by a heretical cobbler than by a person who had subscribed all the thirty-nine articles, but had never handled an awl. Men act thus, not because they are indifferent to religion, but because they do not see what religion has to do with the mending of their shoes. Yet religion has as much to do with the mending of shoes as with the budget and the army estimates."

And politics has as much to do with the mending of shoes as with the keeping of books or the collection of mails: the points of difference between Republicanism and Democracy have very much to do with a man's fitness to be a President or a Congressman, but they also have nothing in the world to do with his fitness to be a letter carrier or a department clerk. It is true that, as we have among us A. P. A. who would exclude men from office because they profess a particular form of Christianity, so we have professional office seekers who

clamor for the like proscription on grounds of political sentiment or party allegiance; but, in the one case no less than the other, we deal with a small minority, thoroughly discredited among their fellow citizens. If any proof were needed for a proposition so obviously true the hearty and practically unanimous approval accorded to President McKinley's order forbidding merely partisan removals by all newspapers having the least claim to be regarded as exponents of public opinion would furnish this proof.

It is true that when we come to the question how "merit and fitness" for appointment to subordinate and ministerial positions in the public service shall be tested there is not the same unanimity: to the mind of the average American it is not self-evident that these can be best determined through competitive examination, but, wherever opportunity offers, he is rapidly acquiring, or has already acquired, this conviction through experience. In 1887, the Baltimore Reform League, in a letter to the Secretary of the Treasury, which received no reply, informed him that the then Collector of Internal Revenue in that City had appointed to positions of trust one man who had passed two months in jail for keeping a gambling house, another who had been indicted, although never punished, for shooting a ruffian like himself in the very station house where the latter was in custody and about to answer for a murderous assault on the future appointee, and a third who had been imprisoned five years, as an insufficient penalty for perhaps the most unprovoked murder ever committed in the City. These were fair specimens, but specimens only of the class of men who then made up the *personnel* of the Internal Revenue Department there; a Department not then under the merit system. Now, however it may be with politicians, the average citizen, ninety-nine American citizens out of a hundred, would like to keep such men out of public employment: and what will keep them out? Is it the want of recommendations from reputable citizens? But every one obtains recommendations; the most notorious though not the worst, of these Internal Revenue Clerks, said, and I have no doubt said truly, that he had been recommended by some who professed to be, not only respectable but reformers as well. Is it the fear of exposure? But these men were exposed, not in Maryland only, but throughout the length and breadth of the Union, and

what harm did it do them? It didn't stop their salary, and, while that was paid, for what else did they care? Is it their incompetency to discharge their legitimate duties? But they were not appointed to discharge those duties: they were appointed to do other work for which they were thoroughly competent, and which they had often done already to the satisfaction of those who secured their appointments. The one effective barrier which will keep such men out of the service is to make their appointment depend, not on favoritism, but on merit, and on merit tested by a method which radically excludes favoritism; and competitive examinations, whatever their theoretical merits or defects, furnish practically such a test. The Civil Service rules may not give us ideal public servants, but they shut out gamblers and assassins. These gentry are not good at examinations, they share the distaste of their present Senatorial and Congressional patrons for the merit system, and will have none of it. Note well, that, not only in Baltimore, but elsewhere, all scandals such as these have occurred in the departments of the Service not subject to the rules: the convicted murderer I have mentioned passed a Civil Service examination in the Custom House, but took so low a mark that he despaired of appointment and turned his attention to a field of labor where such methods of selection were not then in vogue.

We had simultaneously in our Post Office a very striking object lesson as to the difference in results between a reasonably fair, though unfriendly, observance of the rules by the Postmaster and his fraudulent evasion of them. There was for a year in that office a gentleman who, having no doubt heard that office is a trust, consistently administered his public office as he did his private trusts, that is to say, shamefully abused both. Finding the Civil Service rules in his way, he introduced a scheme of certification and appointment, the practical result of which was that the protection of the rules was reduced to that afforded by a pass examination of candidates. Under this system he was able, as he boasted, to replace many Republican clerks and carriers with Democrats, but what was the character of the latter? From the report of his successor, as strong a partisan as himself, to the Postmaster-General, it appeared that the latter had been obliged, notwithstanding their political orthodoxy, to remove in less than two

years no less than one hundred and nineteen of this gentleman's appointees. "To be more specific as to causes," said the succeeding Postmaster, "they have been as follows: inefficiency, discourtesy, general stupidity, want of activity, drunkenness, indifference as to their duties, want of cleanliness, having dangerous associates, dishonesty, and others in whom I did not have confidence as to their trustworthiness, honesty and competency (the majority having been removed for drunkenness.)" The grammar of this statement may not be faultless, but its meaning is clear, and, taken in connection with the history of his predecessor's proceedings, very significant. When Civil Service Reform had been practically eliminated by the latter's ingenious devices, the door was opened to the drunken, dirty, disreputable, dishonest and stupid hangers-on of influential politicians who wished them supported at public expense, men just able to stumble through an examination, and whom the new Postmaster had for his own protection and comfort to get rid of. And yet the latter was no more of a reformer than the man he succeeded; for his chief assistant he chose a person whom the President had been deterred by earnest remonstrances, based on his antecedents, from making United States Marshal. Such then was the order: real civil service reform, respectable men as officers, sham civil service reform, drunkards and slovens as officers, no civil service reform at all, gamblers and assassins as officers. These were the lessons of Mr. Cleveland's first term in Maryland.

We should find, if we sought them, the same conclusions established by similar facts in many, if not all, other States: for example, there were in the year 1896, one hundred and ten dismissals for drunkenness from the public service of New York City: of those dismissed *two* had been appointed after competitive examination, *one hundred and eight* had been appointed without examination; but the length to which this paper has grown forbids my alluding to more than one other aspect of the matter, an aspect unsuitable for presentation in great detail, but too vitally important to be wholly neglected.

Before the days of Civil Service Reform, or, at least, before the Pendleton bill became law, it was my very unpleasant professional duty to take part in the trial of a suit brought against the then Postmaster of Baltimore by a young woman formerly employed in the office and whom he had dismissed. Of the

disclosures made in that trial it is sufficient to say that they caused the removal of the defendant from office and practically closed his political career, but they had another result which was of greater significance: the succeeding Postmaster dismissed within a few months every woman employed in the office (except two very old ladies), and publicly announced that he would never employ another. When he had a successor of different politics the latter adhered to the same policy, and, in conversation with me, defended it by saying, in substance: "The women in whom politicians are sufficiently interested to urge them for these places, are often of such a class that, if I were obliged to discipline one of them, I should never know what story she might tell about me." Those acquainted with the departmental services in Washington before the introduction of the merit system and especially for the ten years next succeeding the close of the war, will understand his allusion and appreciate its force.

In this matter we must indeed avoid exaggeration: the vast majority of the women then employed by the government were undoubtedly virtuous and estimable, I should be very reluctant to believe that it was then, or would be now, possible to find in any legitimate occupation, a considerable number of American women of whom the majority, or even a large minority, should be otherwise; but, as every one so employed had then gained his or her position through influence of some sort, and almost invariably through the influence of some politician interested in the employee, the origin and nature of this interest became matters of suspicion and gossip and, in view of the character and habits of some among our public men, of suspicion not always unreasonable and of gossip not always groundless, in the case, not only of the comparatively few towards whom this involved no injustice, but of well nigh every woman who entered the public service of her country. It may be that to some the abating of this nuisance through Civil Service Reform seems a matter of small moment; it is even possible that some of the statesmen now posturing as enemies to the merit system and all of its fruits regard the loss of a *Parc aux Cerfs* maintained at the taxpayers' cost for their benefit as a legitimate grievance: but need I ask twice if the American people, having seen this ordure washed away, would knowingly suffer its renewal?

In closing this long trespass on your attention I will ask the "Anti-Civil Service" champions in Congress to "look at Maryland" and note something which even they can understand in the results of the late election. The breach of ante-election promises on the part of the legislature chosen there in 1895, and particularly on the part of those members of the House of Delegates from Baltimore city who voted against the real, not the bogus, civil service reform measure submitted to them, was not quite so shameless as what they urge on their party in Congress; but it was bad enough: of the eighteen city members, but one has been re-elected this Autumn, but one of the delegation has been promoted to the State Senate; he introduced the bill prepared by the Civil Service Reform Association of Maryland, conducted the debate on its behalf and voted for it to the end: does this look as though the people of Maryland didn't want Civil Service Reform? They seem, at all events, to want its friends. And are its enemies in the national legislature quite sure that, like the voters of Baltimore, their enraptured constituents may not insist on keeping them at home next November? So much for the benefit of the "Anti-Civil Servicers:" to the really responsible politicians of the Republican party let me say something more serious. Public men who would have their party shamefully violate the pledges of its platform may be readily believed if they say these pledges, on their own part, at least, were hypocritical and mendacious, but the fact affords them no justification; their moral standards may be those of poker sharps and confidence men, but it is not for them to say so: if their party has obtained power under false pretences, I warn them that they will not be heard with patience when they tell a duped people: "You ought to have known that we lied."

## The Legal Situation:—The Right to Compete for Public Employment.

BY EDWIN BURRITT SMITH.

George William Curtis stated the purpose of civil-service reformers, as early as 1869, in these words: "What we want is to intrench the principle and practice of Washington in the law." (II Orations and addresses, 9.) The pioneer step to this end had been taken in Congress two years earlier when Thomas J. Jenckes presented his report on the condition of the civil service, accompanied by a bill to regulate the civil service of the United States and to promote its efficiency.

This early desire to embody the proposed reform in the law of the land found its first expression in the ninth section of the sundry appropriations bill of March 3, 1871. This measure authorizes the President "to prescribe such rules and regulations for the admission of persons into the civil service of the United States as will best promote the efficiency thereof, and ascertain the fitness of each candidate in respect to age, health, character, knowledge and ability for the branch of service into which he seeks to enter." It also authorized the President "to employ suitable persons to conduct said inquiries, to prescribe their duties, and to establish regulations for the conduct of persons who may receive appointments in the civil service."

This prompt recognition that the proposed reform must find expression in the law, shows how clearly its pioneers comprehended the nature of the mighty task to which they had set their hands. The story of what followed their first success in securing legal recognition of the reform—of the appointment by President Grant of an admirable commission headed by Mr. Curtis, of the active opposition by the spoilsmen, of the indifference of public sentiment, and finally in 1875 of the refusal of

appropriations by Congress and consequent suspension of the rules—is too well known to need recounting here.

The early leaders of the reform movement, in seeking “to intrench the principles and practice of Washington in the law,” made no mistake in the remedy for the monstrous evils of the spoils system. They failed for the moment sufficiently to realize that law, to be effective under free institutions, must be the command of popular opinion. However, to them the failure of the act of 1871 was only a repulse. They at once appealed from Congress to the people. By a few years of well-directed agitation they aroused and informed public opinion. The direct results were the national act of 1883, the New York act of the same year, the Massachusetts act of 1884, the New York constitutional provision of 1894, the Illinois act of 1895 and recent charter provisions for various cities. These achievements mark the progress of a rising and active popular sentiment in support of the merit system, which gives bright promise of its early extension to our entire civil service, national, state and municipal.

The legal situation is just now of peculiar interest. In Massachusetts, where the reform of course found a congenial atmosphere, it has been accepted as part and parcel of the orthodox faith. This happy result was not reached without some difficulty and even litigation. The appointing officers and the courts were for a time much perplexed by the veteran preference legislation; but a way has finally been found to recognize two privileged classes, women and veterans, under legislation the general purpose of which is to open public employment to the free competition of all. The Supreme Court, in the case of *Brown vs. Russell*, 166 Mass., 14, early in 1896 held the act of 1895, which required the appointment of any veteran to any position for which he and three citizens of his selection might certify him to be qualified, to be unconstitutional. Thereupon, by act of 1896, it was provided that veterans found to be qualified upon examination shall be preferred in appointment to



all others, except women. The act also permits appointing officers to appoint or employ veterans without examination. This act the court, by a majority of four to three, has sustained, on the ground that the legislature may have considered that veterans, otherwise qualified, are "likely to possess courage, constancy, habits of obedience and fidelity, which are valuable qualifications for any public office or employment; or that the recognition of the services of veterans in the way provided for by the statute would encourage that love of country and devotion to the welfare of the state which it concerns the commonwealth to foster." The minority of the court refuse to concede that the fact of being a veteran bears such relation to the duties of a present office or employment in the civil service that it can be made a decisive test in the selection of persons for employment, or that service in the army or navy in the late war is the only way to acquire special fitness for public employment. They say: "The important matter is to get the best possible service, and the selections should be made with reference to the qualifications or fitness for the performance of the duties which are to be performed. And, since this is so, it is not within the constitutional power of the legislature to fix as a decisive test anything which does not bear such a relation to the duties to be performed as to show special fitness for the performance of those duties;" 166 Mass. 589. It is evident that the act thus sustained has at least gone to the extreme limit in securing a class preference by law.

The legal situation in New York shows that the fully evolved spoilsman is not awed even in the presence of a constitutional provision. The constitution of 1894 requires that "appointments and promotions in the civil service of the State, and of all civil divisions thereof, . . . shall be according to merit and fitness, to be ascertained, so far as practicable, by examination, which, so far as practicable, shall be competitive." The Court of Appeals, in the case of *People v. Roberts*, 148 N. Y. Rep., 148, broadly says: "The principle that all appointments in the civil service must be made according

to merit and fitness, to be ascertained by competitive examinations, is expressed in such broad and imperative language that in some respects it must be regarded as beyond the control of the legislature, and secure from any statutory changes. If the legislature should repeal all the statutes and regulations on the subject of appointments in the civil service, the mandate of the constitution would still remain, and would so far execute itself as to require the courts, in a proper case, to pronounce appointments made without compliance with its requirements illegal."

The same court, in the case of *Chittenden v. Wurster*, 152 N. Y. Rep. 345, 358, holds that the question whether the examination of a candidate for a public position is practicable, is judicial and depends upon the nature and character of the duties of the position. This case presented the question whether a clerk to the committees of the Brooklyn board of aldermen, an assistant warrant clerk, a dockmaster, a chief clerk, a law clerk, a surveyor, a finance clerk, a license fee collector, a department secretary, a commissioner's clerk and a deputy license clerk, are within the constitutional provision, it appearing that they had been appointed without competitive examination. The plaintiffs produced a mass of evidence, including examination papers, reports and various civil service regulations, to show that competitive examinations for the appointments in question are practicable. The defendants produced no evidence to show that they are impracticable. The trial justice held "that it was and is practicable to ascertain the merit and fitness of a person to be appointed to each of said positions by competitive examinations." The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court held that "none of these appointees fall within the debatable class, but were plainly susceptible of being filled by competitive examination." (14 App. Div. Reps., 497.)

The Court of Appeals, by a majority of four to three, reversed the lower courts, holding generally, that where the duties of a position are not merely clerical, and are such as especially devolve upon the head of the office,

which by reason of his numerous duties he is compelled to delegate to others, the performance of which require skill, judgment, trust and confidence and involve the responsibility of the officer or the municipality which he represents, the position should be treated as confidential. (152 N. Y. Rep., 360).

The conclusion of the majority of the court was strongly contested in dissenting opinions by Judges Gray and O'Brien, in the first of which Chief Judge Andrews concurred. They pointed out that the six Justices below were unanimous in finding, upon uncontradicted evidence, that it was practicable to fill all the places in question by competitive examinations, and that "the obvious effect of the constitution was to remove the eleven places in question from the non-competitive schedule since it was practicable to fill them all by competitive examination." (152 N. Y. Rep. pp. 386, 393.) Judge O'Brien, in his very able dissenting opinion, correctly stated the situation in these words: "The future of the law which now rests upon the basis of the constitution is dependent upon the decision of this court. The decision in this case will either place the reform upon a reasonable and just basis, and command the approval of all good men, or it will be a step backward." (Id. p. 389.) While the majority of the court frankly announce that "Should time and experience prove that we are in error . . . we shall not hesitate to carry out the spirit and intent of the law" (Id. p. 360.), it is to be remembered that the Court of Appeals must alone determine what the spirit and intent of the constitution require.

The prevailing opinion in the *Chittenden-Wurster* case must be regarded as a loose construction of the constitutional requirement that appointments and promotions shall be according to merit and fitness, to be ascertained by competitive examination, so far as practicable. It is "a step backward," by a great court, which had from the outset led in judicial support of the merit system. In the presence of a judgment so favorable to the spoilsmen, resting as it does upon the opinion

of four of the Judges, against that of three others unanimously supported by the six Justices of the Supreme Court who passed upon the case below, the Court of Appeals can no longer truly say, what it said in the Roberts' case in speaking of the reform : "This court, upon more than one occasion, has, with entire unanimity expressed its approval of the principle, and exercised all of its powers in every proper case in aid of all laws intended to carry out the idea." (148 N. Y. Rep., 364.) If the majority opinion of the court is finally to prevail, the constitutional provision of New York, requiring competitive examinations so far as practicable, falls far short of the Illinois statute which provides that all applicants for positions in the classified service, from which but few places are excluded, "shall be subjected to examination, which shall be public, competitive and free to all citizens of the United States, with specified limitations as to residence, age, health, habits and moral character."

The Legislature of New York under an irresponsible dictatorship, has persistently neglected, since the adoption of the constitutional provision of 1894, to provide appropriate legislation to give it full and affirmative effect, as commanded by the constitution itself. This neglect was emphasized by the passage, at the last session, of an act providing for two examinations to ascertain the "merit and fitness" of candidates for appointment, one by the civil service commission to determine their relative "merit" and one by, or under the authority of, the appointing officer to satisfy him as to their "fitness." Each examination is to cover one-half of the rating of candidates. It is not in fact required that the so-called "examination" to ascertain "fitness" shall be competitive, or that it shall be public or made matter of record. It may be conducted by "some person or board designated by the person holding such power of appointment." In plain words, this so-called examination may be held at the party headquarters, on the street, or in the corner saloon, and may be conducted by a political committee, the party boss, or a convenient barkeeper.

Mr. Schurz, in his powerful address of protest to the governor, properly suggested that holding two examinations to ascertain "merit and fitness" is like requiring two examinations by physicians to find whether one is "hale and hearty," one as to whether he is "hale" and the other as to whether he is "hearty."

The act in question is the clumsy device of spoils-men to nullify the constitution of the State. That a conspiracy so transparent and subversive of public order can succeed, is of course impossible. There is nothing in the history of the courts of New York to give any promise of success to an unlawful purpose so obvious. In the prevailing opinion in the *Chittenden-Wurster* case, written after the passage of this measure, the Court of Appeals significantly say: "It is said that each officer having appointments to make could himself examine the applicants for position, and in that way determine who should be the appointee by a competitive examination. Undoubtedly, but it will readily be seen that this system would practically nullify the civil service law and bring it into disrepute." (152 N. Y. Rep. p. 356.)

The submission of the "Black Bill" to the scrutiny of the courts, which is soon to be made, can have but one result. The certain defeat of this transparent attempt to nullify the constitution ought to prepare the way for the legislation which it commands.

The change of administration in Chicago last April has subjected the Illinois statute to a crucial test. Unfortunately, the act did not go into effect until the July following its adoption at the city election of 1895. That election resulted in a change from democratic to republican control. The new mayor promptly turned out "the gang," as his followers not inappropriately called the democratic host, and installed "the boys" who were expected to control in his interest the republican machine, now euphonetously known as "the organization." This clean sweep and substitution even extended to some six hundred members of the police force. Having thus strikingly illustrated the need, and prepared

the way, for reform, Mayor Swift appointed an excellent commission and thereafter cordially supported it. This seeming inconsistency on his part is perhaps traceable to a desire to mark the introduction of the merit system by a conversion as dramatic as that of St. Paul. Possibly he sought at the outset of his administration to put temptation behind him, or to create a sort of solitude in which the new commission might learn its duties and formulate the rules required by law. Whatever the truth, the mayor thereafter sustained the commission while it worked out a thorough classification of the service, prepared adequate rules, held many examinations and certified a few eligibles for appointment. Under such conditions came the change from republican to democratic rule in the election of Mayor Harrison last spring and a clean sweep of Mayor Swift's personal appointees.

The Illinois statute is based on the national, New York and Massachusetts acts. It differs from the earlier legislation in that it is more inclusive and stringent in its provisions. The excluded "head or heads of any department" of the New York act gives place to the "heads of any principal department" in the statute of Illinois. Unrestricted removals under all prior legislation give way in Illinois to removals only for cause, to be ascertained upon written charges after opportunity to the person charged to be heard. The Illinois act also provides that vacancies shall be filled by promotion where it is practicable, that promotions shall be "on the basis of merit and seniority of service and examination," and that "all examinations for promotion shall be competitive."

The commissions under the Illinois statute are continuous and independent bodies. Mayor Harrison, however, assumed the Chicago commissioners to be his subordinates, and that a majority of them should be in political and personal accord with himself. Upon the refusal of the majority of the old commission (the other member having been appointed comptroller) to accept his construction of the words, "heads of any principal

department," used in naming the excluded officials, to include some fifty heads of bureaus in the departments, inspectors and captains of police and various foremen and others, the mayor removed the two remaining members on frivolous charges afterwards trumped up to comply with a provision of the statute requiring him to file his reasons for such removals. The new commission promptly published an opinion construing the words, "heads of any principal department," so as to exclude from the classified service most of the desirable positions claimed by the mayor as spoils, thus giving him (to use their words) "the benefit of the doubt" as to the positions which "should be taken out of the classified service." The mayor was thus enabled to fill the higher places in the service with avowed and active enemies of the merit system, an opportunity which he promptly improved. His appointees, with some honorable exceptions, in co-operation with the council, are doing what may be done to place the civil service law in a false light before the public, and—so far as practicable—to render it inoperative.

The statute excludes from the classified service "officers . . . whose appointment is subject to confirmation by the city council." When the act was adopted but few officials, some of them of minor importance, were subject to such confirmation. Upon the accession of Mayor Harrison, it was feared by some of the best friends of the law that it is especially vulnerable at this point. Its enemies quickly sought to avail themselves of their apparent opportunity. The council promptly created a considerable number of new positions, making them all subject to confirmation by itself. The committee on civil service, on June 14, 1897, reported forms for four ordinances, recommending their passage. By these measures it was gravely proposed to designate as "'heads of principal departments,' as said term is used in section eleven" of the civil service act, numerous "public officials" and "all employees of the City of Chicago, receiving \$3 or less per day, as compensation for work;" to make "the head of each

and every department, bureau or division of work in the public service of Chicago," and certain experts, private secretaries, head assistants and others, subject to confirmation by the council ; and to make "all transfers, appointments, discharges and promotions in the fire and police departments" subject to the order of the mayor and approval of the council. These extraordinary proposals were opposed by the administration which was not prepared to attempt the complete nullification of the statute. Two weeks later the council passed, as an administration measure, an ordinance which provides that a considerable list of "officials" named "shall be designated as 'heads of principal departments,' as said term is used in section eleven" of the civil service act.

Some of the friends of the law, fearing these attacks were aimed at a vital point, deemed it wise to endeavor to save something by acquiescence. Others, and notably the Citizens' Association, held that the way to save the law was to defend it against all comers. The Citizens' Association retained special counsel and procured the Attorney-General to file petitions, on behalf of the people, in the Supreme Court for writs of *mandamus*, to obtain an authoritative and final interpretation of the law and of the power of the city council in respect to it. These cases were fully presented to the court in October last, and early decisions are expected. The new commission only contended for a liberal construction of the words, "heads of any principal department." The corporation counsel boldly attacked the constitutionality of the act, and defended the ordinance which seeks to make subordinate officials "heads of principal departments" merely by thus designating them. The writer's relation to these cases renders improper here any prophecy in regard to the result. It must suffice here to say, that we hope for a judgment by the court strongly sustaining the act, with a finding that the ordinance is void as unreasonable and in conflict with



the statute.\* The law is supported by public opinion. The penalties for its violation are severe. If fully sustained by the court, it will be at least reasonably enforced.

The President, by his executive order of July 27, 1897, directing that removals shall be made only for just cause, upon written charges and opportunity to be heard, has raised the question whether removals should be controlled by law. Civil service reformers have hesitated to place any legal restraint upon the power of removal by the appointing officer for any cause satisfactory to him. They have assumed that such officers will not be apt to remove efficient subordinates to make way for unknown successors to be taken from the eligible list. As early as 1881, in his address before The American Science Association, Mr. Curtis said :

“Removals for cause alone means, of course, removal for legitimate cause, such as dishonesty, negligence, or incapacity. But who shall decide that such cause exists? This must be determined either by the responsible superior officer or by some other authority. But if left to some other authority the right of counsel and the forms of a court would be invoked; the whole legal machinery of mandamuses, injunctions, certioreris, and the rules of evidence would be put in play to keep an incompetent clerk at his desk or a sleepy watchman on his beat. Cause for removal of a letter-carrier in the post office or of an accountant in the custom house would be presented with all the pomp of impeachment and established like a high crime and misdemeanor.” (II Orations and Addresses p. 190).

Mr. Curtis, in his second annual address as President of the League in 1883, also said: “We do not plead for fixed permanency in public place, nor assert

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\* The Supreme Court of Illinois on December 22, 1897, handed down a strong opinion in these cases, holding the Statute to be constitutional and the ordinance in question void for unreasonableness. The court, in effect, holds that the Council has no power to add to the list of exclusions from the act. This decision places the Illinois act on a firm basis.

a vested right in public employment. Due subordination and discipline are essential to all effective organized service, and, therefore, dismissal for proper cause should be prompt and sure. To this end the power of removal should be left as free as possible, provided that motives for its illegitimate exercise are destroyed. Such a provision secures both proper discipline and a just tenure." (Id. p. 248.) Again, in his sixth annual address, he said: "The power of removal no less than that of appointment is a public trust, and it cannot be rightly used arbitrarily or for any other cause than the public interest. Such cause should be publicly assigned and recorded, that the people may clearly understand the reason of the change in service." (Id. p. 340.)

These passages indicate what has been the generally accepted view of reformers. Aside from the prohibition of removals for political reasons, there was no attempt until recently to limit the power of removal by appointing officers. The framers of the Illinois act took the first step in advance by providing that "no officer or employee in the classified service . . . shall be removed or discharged except for cause, upon written charges and after an opportunity to be heard." From this provision laborers and "persons having the custody of public money, for the safe keeping of which another has given bond," are excepted. "Such charges shall be investigated by or before said civil service commission, or . . . some officer or board appointed by said commission to conduct such investigation. The finding and decision of such commission, or investigating officer or board when approved by such commission, shall be certified to the appointing officer, and shall be forthwith enforced by such officer." (Act 1895, Sec. 12.)

These provisions, it will be observed, make no attempt to define what causes shall be sufficient to justify removals. It is not believed that the act confers upon those in the classified service any vested right to continue in public employment, or to call upon the courts to determine whether any alleged cause of

removal, except it be political, is sufficient to justify it. The intention is to protect the classified service from arbitrary and unjust removals by appointing officers, and to prevent removals for other than causes that will bear public record, after opportunity to make defense. Under this act the commission is made publicly responsible for every removal from the classified service.

The question involved in the recent decisions of United States courts, whether the President's order in respect to removals has the force of law, is less important than the question whether it ought to have such force. The answer to the first depends upon the extent of executive power under the civil service act to make rules that shall have the force of law. The answer to other must be sought in the further inquiry, whether public employment can be the subject of vested right,—whether office is a place of public service, or a castle to be privately held and enjoyed.

The merit system of appointment recognizes and protects the right of all to compete for public employment, the right of freedom of contract with the largest employer of skilled and unskilled labor. The Massachusetts act provides for the punishment of officials and others who shall “defeat, deceive, or obstruct any person in respect of his or her *right of examination*.” (Sec. 18). The constitution of New York requires all appointments to be made upon “examination which, so far as practicable, shall be *competitive*.” The Illinois act provides that “all applicants for offices or places in said classified service . . . shall be subjected to examination, which shall be public, *competitive and free to all citizens of the United States*, with specified limitations as to residence, age, health, habits, and moral character.” (Sec., 6.)

The Supreme Court of Massachusetts, in the case of *Commonwealth vs. Perry*, 155 Mass., 117, said: “There are certain fundamental rights of every citizen which are recognized in the organic law of all our free American States. . . . The declaration of rights in the constitution of Massachusetts enumerates among the natural

inalienable rights of men the right 'of acquiring, possessing and protecting property.' The right to acquire, possess, and protect property includes the right to make reasonable contracts, which shall be under the protection of the law."

The Supreme Court of Illinois, in the case of *Braceville Coal Co. v. People*, 147 Ill. 66, 70, said:

"The fundamental principle upon which liberty is based, in free and enlightened government, is equality under the law of the land. It has accordingly been everywhere held, that liberty, as that term is used in the constitution, means not only freedom of the citizen from servitude and restraint, but is deemed to embrace the right of every man to be free in the use of his powers and faculties, and to adopt and pursue such avocation and calling as he may choose, subject only to the restraints necessary to secure the common welfare."

The same court, in the great case of *Ritchie v. People*, 155 Ill., 98, 104, also said: "The privilege of contracting is both a liberty and property right. . . . The right to use, buy and sell property and contract in respect thereto is protected by the constitution. Labor is property, and the laborer has the same right to sell his labor, and to contract with reference thereto, as has any other property owner. . . . The right to labor or employ labor, and make contracts in respect thereto upon such terms as may be agreed upon between the parties, is included in the constitutional guaranty."

Thus it follows that the right of freedom of contract with the largest employer of labor, is a property right which is protected by the fundamental law. (*See also Stimson's Handbook to the Labor Law of U. S., p. 10, etc.;*) that all citizens, having the proper requirements of age, health and character, have a property right to compete for public as well as private employment. It is the great purpose of the merit system of appointment to give force and effect to this fundamental right of free men.

We are now ready for the inquiry, whether the right to compete for public employment extends, on behalf of

the successful competitors, beyond the threshold of such employment, there to become a vested property right in the office itself. Unless offices exist to be held, the answer must be in the negative. A fundamental principle of civil service reform is that public office is a public trust. It is an opportunity to render a public service, and whatever of personal honor and profit attach to it is but incidental. The public has a right to the most efficient and devoted service, and to this end to continue competent and faithful officials in its employment. Thus the public need, not personal interest, becomes and is the basis and measure of a just tenure. Only in this view can "the public service be, indeed, the public service," (Gladstone)—the property of the nation, not an asset of a party boss or machine.

We may, therefore, conclude that the right of competition for public employment is a property right of all; that this right is part and parcel of the fundamental right of freedom of contract; that a right of such importance ought to be given full force and effect by positive law. We have seen that this is the great purpose of all civil service legislation. It also follows, that public office is not properly a subject of vested right; that official position is an opportunity for public service, not a private property interest; and that its control is an executive, not a judicial, function. If these conclusions are sound, it remains for the executive to forbid removals except for just cause. It does not follow that the President's order is less wise because it is not properly enforceable by the courts. It will be to the lasting honor of the present administration if it shall firmly establish a rule of executive action to prevent removals without just cause.

The evolution of modern democracy is from the simple and primitive groups of kinsmen, known to us as village communities. The crude democracy of these isolated communities gave way to the despotic feudal monarchy which molded them into the great nation having a definite territory, uniform laws and comparative freedom from local disorder. Then came the long

struggle for a democracy which should combine the great advantages of a wide national authority with as much as practicable of the local self-government and personal freedom of the village community. This struggle is marked by a long succession of popular victories over despotic privilege. The spoils system in our day is a mercenary survival of feudal privilege. Its destruction will remove another barrier that stands between the people and their government. The merit system, in its purpose "to intrench the principle and practice of Washington in the Law," seeks to recover a fundamental right of free men. To such a purpose, complete success is sure. It may be here and there delayed, but it will come.

# Civil Service Reform and Municipal Government.

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## FIRST PAPER.

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BY ALBERT SHAW.

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WE have been talking much in this country of Municipal Reform ; and that phrase, when applied to existing conditions in various cities, embraces obviously, a great range and diversity of specific needs. But it is well for us that we should understand clearly that, in the present stage of our progress, Municipal Reform means before all else civil service reform, and that the abolition of the personal and party spoils system from our municipal administrations is the one and only remedy for the worst of our present evils in city government.

Good government in itself is a fit and desirable thing, and patriotism demands it ; for how can the citizen love his country as he ought if its administration is habitually corrupt and inefficient, and if there is altogether lacking in the exercise of public authority the attributes of disinterestedness, of dignity, and of equal beneficence towards all citizens, regardless of party, race, or other distinction ? Nevertheless, while I do not fail to appreciate the fitness and the moral beauty of good government as an abstract consideration, I have always, in the application of government to local and municipal affairs, preferred to think of government as a means to an end rather than an object in itself.

Municipal government in our day has come to be Collectivism, on a vast and ever more diversified scale. I am familiar with the abstract discussions, current

nowadays, dealing with the question whether or not municipal government may be rightly termed a matter of business. These discussions deal only with definitions. They play with words and phrases. I am not able to see that they bear upon the real work that we have before us in this country.

Nor do I see anything practical to be gained at present by arguments, either for or against the extension of the working functions of municipal government in the direction of local Collectivism, or, as some people prefer to put it, Socialism. The principles of municipal collectivism were established long ago. What we have to deal with now is the practical working out of those principles in concrete instances, as such instances arise.

Inasmuch as we are not going to revive the system of private wells and town pumps, but are universally committed in all enlightened cities to a public water supply, it clearly behooves us to see that the public supply is procured and distributed upon the best possible engineering, financial, and sanitary principles. Inasmuch as we have no intention of going back in this country to the very recent period of private cesspools and open drains, it behooves us to deal in the most enlightened way with the problem of drainage, to the end that the sewer system may perfectly fit the local situation, and that the ultimate sewage disposal may meet the requirements of sanitary science, with a due regard to the economic principles involved. Since good streets, well made and well kept, are a public necessity, and we have no intention of relapsing to primitive conditions in that respect, it plainly devolves upon us to make the paving as good and as durable as engineering experience can devise, and to clean the streets as perfectly as the health and comfort of the community would require. Inasmuch as we do not intend to revert to the period when vagrancy, common begging, street rowdyism, and a great variety of ordinary nuisances and minor misdemeanors were freely tolerated as a matter of course, but on the contrary do intend to maintain



conditions of order, decency, and safety throughout the bounds of the community, it needs no argument to show that we ought to avail ourselves of the best possible methods in the organization and management of the police service, and of the establishments that have to do with the detention and correction of offenders and with the relief of distress. Since, furthermore, we have long ago accepted the principle that it is both the right and the duty of the community to make provision for the instruction of all children, to the end that our average standards of civilization may not decline in the process of transmission from one generation to the next, it is plain enough that our public schools ought to be as good as they can possibly be made, and that their methods ought, from time to time, to be adjusted to meet the new needs of a changing situation.

These statements are the merest commonplace. The man who in our day would argue against good water, good drainage, good streets and good schools, as proper things for a community to secure by collective action, would be looked upon as a mere anachronism, or else as an after-dinner theorizer whose views have nothing to do with those practical concerns that belong to the working hours of the day.

And yet, while everybody believes that these things belong to what may be called the irreducible minimum of a modern city's public necessities, how many of our cities actually possess them? Certainly not many. If the water supply suffices in quantity, in too many instances it falls short in quality. If the ramification of sewers is sufficient to collect liquid waste, it too frequently happens that proper provision is not made for the disposal of sewage. If the street system is judiciously laid out, it is seldom the case that good paving extends beyond a few streets, or that there is any efficient system for keeping the streets clean. If the school houses provide places enough for the children who ought to attend, which is not the case in the great majority of our large towns, it is seldom that the system or the methods of instruction come any-

where near meeting the proper demands of the present day.

Now I am well aware that I have sometimes been accused of presenting an unduly favorable view of contemporary conditions in European cities. I have only to reply that what I have said about cities abroad is in plain print and is true. In many things that belong to the functions of the modern city, most of the European towns are relatively in advance of our own. Nor is it true that the better municipal appointments of European cities are to be attributed either to their greater age or to their superior wealth ; for they are not so rich as our cities by any means, nor, considered as modern urban communities, are they any older. All cities of the modern type belong to the existing regime of steam transportation and industry. For all purposes that municipal administration has now to concern itself with, the modern city is nowhere fifty years old. Considered as a great urban centre, Chicago is of about the same age as Berlin ; and Boston, New York and Baltimore are as old as Glasgow, London and Hamburg. Considered for purposes of modern improvements, Cincinnati, for example, is as old as any city of its size in Europe, and richer than almost any that could be named.

Why, then, to cut short these comparisons, have European cities accomplished more than our own in these practical, concrete directions? I have thought about the matter a good deal, and have investigated it very considerably, studying home conditions quite as carefully as I have those abroad, although I have written more about European cities. And I have reached one firm conclusion, which is that with anything like as good administration in this country as in Europe, we should have been not simply as far advanced in our municipal appointments, but vastly further advanced than the European cities, because all the material conditions have been so much more favorable in our own country.

We have done many things extremely well in this

country, for the reason that private initiative possesses intense energy and high efficiency. And it has happened once in a while, by a stroke of luck, that some department of public administration has for the moment borrowed the personal resources of private enterprise. Now, it happens that in England, France and Germany, municipal work is carried on under a system which normally gives the public the benefit of the best efforts of the best trained men. With us, public work is carried on under a system which normally gives the public something less than the best efforts of men who average far below the best.

Previous to 1890, New York had spent vastly more money for street paving than any city of comparable size or conditions in Europe; and yet New York had only one or two well-paved streets. And this is typical. No language can well exaggerate the frightful losses that American communities have suffered in the thirty years since the civil war through bad administration. Thousands of millions of dollars would only begin to express the tangible losses. And I hold the spoils annex of the American party system as chiefly responsible for this waste of resources and of opportunities.

Certain American visitors, who have recently taken a glance here and there at politics in Europe, have come home to sneer at the demands of those in this country who advocate administrative reform in our cities and who sometimes cite European experiences as affording instructive lessons. These scornful personages have in their turn sought to convince the people of this country that partisanship prevails in precisely the same way in European cities, and particularly in those of England, as we have been accustomed to see partisanship prevail in our American cities.

I absolutely deny that this is true. It is true, that,—to an extent which would seem to me to be unfortunate,—the annual elections which fill one-third of the seats in the municipal councils of England have recently been fought to an increasing extent upon the Liberal and Conservative lines of the national parties. Neverthe-

less, it is worth while here to observe that in the recent elections held on November 1st, there were as usual a very great number of non-contested seats, which simply means that the councilman for a given ward, regardless of his preferences in national politics, had served his constituents in local matters so well that nobody opposed his re-election for another term ; and thus his unopposed nomination gave him another three years of office without the expense or trouble of holding an election in his ward. The revolt of the Liberal Unionists in England, which made an intense feeling between the Gladstonians and the followers of Mr. Chamberlain, was to a considerable extent responsible for the infusion of national politics in the municipal elections. But even in Birmingham, where these November elections for the town council have often been most stubbornly contested, I have not been able to discover that there is the slightest taint of partisanship in appointments, or in the practical work of administration.

In one-fourth of these English municipalities holding their regular elections last November, the polls were not opened in a single ward, for the reason that only one candidate was presented in each division. In the remaining three-fourths of the English municipal corporations there were also of course a great number of uncontested wards. In many instances where contests did occur, it is true (as I have taken pains to ascertain), that there was no question of party politics involved, but only local or personal questions.

In Liverpool, on the other hand, the fight was a very spirited one on party lines, although even there in seven wards, one-fourth of the whole number, no contest was made. It happens that just now the advanced Liberals in England are trying in every way to show that the tide of national feeling is turning against the existing Tory government. For this reason the Liverpool Radicals contested nineteen Conservative council seats. But in eighteen cases out of the nineteen, the public preferred to endorse things as they were rather than to make a change.

In another English town, every one of the retiring members was a candidate for re-election, and every one of them was defeated; but this was because public opinion was in favor of a new municipal water supply, and elected new men who were committed to the desired policy. In the great town of Sheffield there were contests in only two wards. But the great and significant point that I wish to enforce is that in not one of all these English towns was there involved, even incidentally, the idea that the result could in any wise affect the appointive offices, either for or against members of any political party.

If the chief of police, the superintendent of water supply, the head of the public library, the superintendent of the municipal gas works, the manager of the great sewage disposal establishment, or any other of the principal working heads of departments, should resign, it is almost inconceivable that the party results of an election for the municipal council would have the slightest effect upon the appointment of a successor to such a department head. Far less is it conceivable that the victory of one party or the other in a municipal election should result in the removal of an efficient head of a department for the sake of giving the place, for partisan or personal reasons, to someone connected with the victorious element. It is absolutely agreed on all hands in England that the discretionary heads of administrative municipal departments shall be selected for their fitness, regardless of their party affiliations, and that they shall be retained so long as their conduct is good and their services are efficient. And if this is true of heads of departments, it is hardly necessary to add that it is also true of the entire ramification of subordinate appointments.

So far as practical every-day administration is concerned, a large part of the difference between the English municipal system and the system established by the new charter of the Greater New York lies in the fact that in England the municipal council exercises the appointing power, while in New York the appoint-

ing power is exercised by the mayor. The working administration is carried on in England by a number of appointed heads of departments, and the same thing may be said of the government of the Greater New York. In England those heads of departments are chosen by the municipal council, working through its committees. In New York they are to be chosen by the mayor. If the very large Tory majority in the Liverpool municipal council should decide to dismiss existing heads of departments in order to appoint Tories to succeed them,—selected on the New York plan with special reference to private and personal as well as political affiliations,—such an act would involve a greater change in the actual system of government in England than would be involved in changing the constitutional monarchy to an absolute monarchy like that of Russia. The repudiation of a non-partisan civil service on purely business principles under the merit system, would signify a change incomparably more vital than any possible variations in the mere outward structure of municipal government,—such for instance as appear when one compares the typical English municipal system with the French, the German, or even that which the Greater New York Charter provides

Further than that, the making of partisan appointments to office would be deemed in English towns not merely a blow at the efficiency of administration, but also a violation of every principle of civic justice and equality, a proscription of half the tax-paying community by the governing authorities,—in short, an act of hostility, which carried on to its logical end would mean the denial of civic rights to all citizens not adhering to a single political party, or, in a word, civil war. At least the sharp drawing of political lines in municipal appointments in England would now be deemed by public opinion to be practically as objectionable as political discrimination in courts of justice, or as the exemption from taxation of all the adherents of the party in power. And the same thing may be said concerning the generally excellent public service that

one finds in French, German, and other continental cities.

When therefore American politicians return from their brief vacations in Europe to tell us that they find party lines recognized in municipal elections abroad, they have told us only a very limited part of the truth. There is no such thing in England, or France, or Germany, as a *partisan management* of municipal public works. I have known such a thing in an American city as ninety-nine per cent. of the common labor employed (to an extent of hundreds of workmen on streets and other public work), adhering not only to the national party, but also to the local faction of the party that held the reins of municipal power for the time being. And I have known, as everyone else in this country has, of more than one city where at least nine-tenths of the public appointees holding positions requiring skill or the exercise of discretion have also been filled in the same way by the henchmen of a political boss or faction.

As our civilization advances further, and as the necessary functions of a municipal government become more varied and elaborate, this American system of partisanship in appointments becomes more and more intolerable. Favoritism to the extent of a partisan appointment or two in the health service may mean a great epidemic, with paralysis of business as well as loss of life, where the European system of non-partisanship would have meant perfect safety.

Just now there is much agitation throughout the United States touching the question of the proper regulation in the general interest of such quasi-public services as the supply of illumination and the provision of transit facilities. One hears the advocacy of public ownership even in strange and unexpected quarters. The workmen of the City of New York have of late especially identified themselves with the demand for a great extension of the functions of municipal government. Yet they have elected as mayor, a gentleman who approached the assumption of his official duties

with the one bold and unqualified announcement that nobody could even be considered for an appointment, unless he belonged to the Democratic party,—by which he meant Tammany Hall and its affiliated organizations. Surely the workingmen of New York ought to have intelligence enough to understand that a non-partisan administration, based strictly upon reasonable assurances of long tenure and of promotion on principles of fitness, must be the *sine qua non* of any successful extension of municipal functions.

They have learned something of successful experiments abroad in the municipalization of lighting supplies, and even of street railroads; and they are clamoring for a radical advance in such directions by our American cities. But if they care for these things they should have learned also that there is no partisanship in Glasgow's municipal transit,—which has been made successful through the meritorious labors of Mr. John Young precisely as street-cleaning in New York has been made successful through the meritorious labors of Colonel Waring.

How has it happened that a place like Glasgow has proceeded to increase the range of its important municipal activities? The answer is perfectly plain. That city was emboldened to try new ventures because its non-partisan administration of earlier ones had been thoroughly satisfactory. John Young had been the Colonel Waring of Glasgow for a good many years. That is to say, he had been superintendent of the cleansing department, and had worked out and administered a remarkably perfect system for the cleansing of the streets and the collection and disposal of garbage. If anybody knows John Young's politics, certainly nobody cares. He has been allowed to organize and manage the municipal street railway service on strict business principles, and has promptly made a success of it,—precisely as Colonel Waring, if commissioned to organize and manage a municipal lighting service, or a transit service, would have no difficulty in carrying the matter out as successfully as any like services elsewhere.



If the workingmen of New York had really wanted to take the short cut to enlarged municipal ownership and operation, they ought to have voted for Seth Low, for the simple reason that Seth Low was pledged to organize a municipal administration on strict business principles, free from the taint of politics, precisely as Glasgow or Berlin is organized. Tammany, in its latest platform, professes to have become converted to the principles of enlarged municipal ownership of natural monopolies of supply. But in the very same breath Tammany informs us that a municipal lighting plant, for instance, if established in New York, shall not be managed by a man selected solely for his fitness to manage such a business, but must be managed in any case by a politician belonging to Tammany Hall.

Nothing more ignominious in all the history of American municipal government has ever been witnessed than the recent confession on the part of the city government of Philadelphia that it was incompetent to manage the lighting supply, and its transfer by lease for a long term of years of the municipal gas plant to a private corporation. Nearly every large city in Europe conducts the business of supplying light as a municipal department. Under any ordinary decent system of administration, there is probably no department of municipal business so simple in its nature and so perfectly easy to finance and to administer as a gas supply. The European cities have been conspicuously successful in this particular branch of their municipal business. They have justified the experiment of the municipalization of lighting supplies by making the venture financially beneficial to the public treasury, by greatly improving the public lighting of the streets, and above all by a greatly diffused and cheapened supply to private citizens. Where European cities have been so successful Philadelphia has confessed failure; and the sole reason lies in the fact that the party spoils system, rather than the merit system, has dominated the city government.

The police, the fire department, the care of the

streets, the erection of public works, the water supply, the sanitary services, and all the varied practical business of carrying on a modern city,—these are not properly matters of party politics. Such public interests should, in their every-day working, be as free from the bias of partisan politics as the administration of justice. Most people in this country admit that school teachers ought not to be appointed for party reasons; and we shall in time come to see with perfect clearness that all other departments of local administration, not less than the schools, must for efficiency's sake be put on the basis of pure merit. When that time arrives it will be safe for the municipality to extend its functions, if such extension should seem desirable.

But on the other hand it might then appear to make very much less difference. For example, I do not find that in a German city it signifies much one way or the other whether the municipal government itself provides an electrical plant and runs it, or gives a charter to a private company. This is because in Germany the municipal governments are efficient enough to take full care of the rights of citizens. And so, if a private company is to manage the electrical supply, it will proceed under the terms of a franchise that exacts everything that is right, both for the municipal treasury and also for the private user of electric light or power. But where, as in this country, municipal administration is on a party basis, and the party is locally controlled by a clique or a boss, there is no one who is looking out efficiently for the rights of the city or of the citizens. The corporation seeking a franchise is looking out for its own interests, and the politicians in control of the municipal situation are looking out for themselves and their party machine. The consequence is that the city and the citizens are usually betrayed. Those who ought to serve the community are traitors to it. The treasury of the city goes empty, while the treasury of the party machine is enriched. In Europe, with permanent non-partisan administrative and law officers in positions of authority, franchises are always carefully drawn in the

interest of the public, and it is practically impossible for a private corporation to obtain any public privilege that is not paid for at its full worth. Under our system, on the contrary, the party spoils administration breaks down public ownership as in Philadelphia, and makes it easy for private ownership to rob the community of valuable franchises, as in New York.

In conclusion of the whole matter, it would seem to me that all honest citizens,—whatever their point of view regarding such questions as public ownership or the extension of municipal functions,—ought to be able to unite upon the indispensable prerequisite of administration upon business principles, whether the work of the municipality is to be enlarged or whether it is to be diminished. A more practical issue cannot be named. And so long as the existing political parties decline to accept the principle of non-partisanship in the making of municipal appointments and the carrying on of municipal business, there will of necessity be a field for independent action in city elections. When, as in England or on the European continent, our political parties shall have abandoned the local spoils system frankly and in good faith, they may strive for victory in municipal campaigns as much as they please and without reproach.

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## SECOND PAPER.

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BY HORACE E. DEMING.

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Political partisanship may properly be roused to most intense activity in determining whether there shall be high tariff or low tariff, protection with incidental revenue or revenue with incidental protection; but there is no proper place for political partisanship in collecting the revenue honestly. The country may be storm swept by the contending political policies of the single gold standard and a dual gold and silver standard at a fixed ratio; but whichever policy wins the work

at the government mint demands not political partisanship, however pure or however intense, but plain every day honest work for honest wage.

A wide gulf lies between questions of public policy on which men divide into opposing political parties and questions that involve merely the honest and efficient administration of public business. Civil Service Reform has nothing to do with the former questions. It does not concern itself with them. With questions of administration it does and must concern itself until all appointments to government positions having nothing to do with determining questions of public policy on which men divide into political parties are made solely for merit and fitness without regard to any partisan political considerations whatsoever.

In short, civil service reform is an administrative reform, not a political reform. It seeks to exclude "politics" altogether from the business-side of the government's operations. Civil service reform means that all employees of the government having merely to do with matters of administration shall be appointed, shall hold their places, and shall be discharged not because they or their sponsors have or have not done political party service but because the employee is personally fit or unfit for his position.

This principle is aptly called the merit principle. How far is it an important factor in the solution of the problem of municipal government? To those who have investigated the nature of the municipal problem the answer is almost too self evident. To others it may be of service to be reminded for a moment how some of the chief activities of a municipality, those which concern most intimately the daily life of its citizens, have come into existence.

When a trail has become a cartroad the cartroad a highway, the highway a constantly traveled and closely thronged city street, the proper maintenance and care of the latter is an administrative problem of the greatest importance to scores of thousands and it may be to hundreds and hundreds of thousands. It is often also a problem of the greatest difficulty. Experience has demonstrated that the streets cannot even be kept clean without the aid of the merit principle.

The isolated house on the prairie or the hill-side is kept healthy by the simplest sanitary measures and its location may

be such that it remains healthy in spite of a reckless disregard of even ordinary sanitary precautions. The building in the congested tenement region of a crowded city not only breeds enfeebled vitality and too often death among its own occupants unless extraordinary sanitary precautions are enforced, but becomes a radiating centre of disease. The enforcement of these precautions is a matter of administration; and the lower the death rate of a city the higher the appreciation and the more rigid the enforcement of the merit principle in the administration of the city's health ordinances.

A sparse population may be sufficiently served by a single teacher in a one roomed school house and the teacher may build the fire, sweep the school room and teach his score or two of scholars. When each school house must accommodate a thousand pupils and there must be hundreds of such school houses, the administrative problem becomes one of the first magnitude. Without the merit system the problem is insoluble. Go to any city in the land; if its public school system is successful, you will find the merit principle actively enforced by the department of education; if its public school system is a failure the merit principle is absent or but lamely recognized.

Wherever there is a multitude in a limited area good order must be enforced, laws in the interest of public morals must be observed, peace must be preserved and a special group of the citizens must be set apart from the rest and charged with the duty and the responsibility of enforcing the laws and preserving order and peace. Is this class corrupt? Does it sell protection to vice and overlook violations of law for its own private gain then there is no merit principle in the police administration. When you find the wives of police captains large landlords and the brothers or cousins of chiefs of police yacht owners, the "starch" has been taken out of police civil service.

What we have said of streets, of the public health, of education and of the police is equally applicable to each of the departments of municipal public service. Each is largely, if not chiefly an administrative problem, and good administration whether of private or public business depends in its last analysis upon the selection of its agents solely with reference to their personal merit and fitness. In the public service the

recognition and enforcement of this truth are incomparably more important and its disregard more far reaching in evil results than in private business.

It is not alone that the private employer must pay in his own person and out of his own pocket the loss occasioned by his unwise selection of employees, while in the public service the public treasury pays the bill and the official superior may even profit pecuniarily and politically by the incompetence or dishonesty of his subordinates, but the public administrative service is subjected to a new master as each change of political policy brings a new party into power. If now the personnel of the purely administrative service is to shift with each change of political policy efficient administration is impossible no matter how lavishly the public funds may be spent to secure it. It is as if the Pennsylvania Railroad Company should change its directors every two or three years on questions of policy such as extending its lines by lease or purchase, constructing new lines, acquiring additional terminals or coal fields, furnishing through transportation, and the like, and with each change of directors should call into its service an entirely new set of station agents, trainmen, superintendents, machinists and civil engineers. The directors' policy might be never so good, the administration would be unspeakably bad. No one doubts or denies these obvious truths as applied to ordinary business affairs, why should there be any doubt of their being equally truths and equally obvious in the case of municipal government.

It is not surprising therefore that there is not a well governed city anywhere whose civil service is not based upon the merit principle and not an ill governed city in whose civil service the evil effect of neglect or positive disregard of this principle do not serve as an example and a warning. These propositions are true of the cities of France and Spain of Germany and England under their widely varying forms of government as well as of the cities in our democratic republic. Municipal government whatever its form and in whatever country is an attempt to meet the common needs of a considerable population concentrated within a limited area. What factor is or can be so important in the solution of this problem as administrative skill and honesty? And the more populous the city the more imperative the demand for honesty and skill

in administration. Whatever the plan of municipal government, however carefully devised, and by whomsoever attempted to be carried out, it is always and everywhere a failure unless the merit principle obtains in the municipal public service and the measure of the failure is the extent of the violation of this principle.

But while it is true that civil service reform is an administrative reform, the existence or absence of the merit principle in the public service is also a decisive factor indetermining important questions of purely municipal policy. Shall the city own or operate its system of intra mural transit? Shall it provide its own system of lighting? Shall it undertake on an adequate scale the economical and sanitary disposition of the city's waste? Shall it establish museums and libraries? Shall it have an intelligent system of large and small parks? Shall the management and improvement of its water front be a matter of public or private enterprise? The mere aggregation of population within a small area creates innumerable sources of revenue; shall these be utilized for the profit of the public treasury? Shall the city go on indefinitely giving away to private individuals the income its own existence creates and which its own needs require? Must the tax rate go ever higher while the almost exhaustless streams of the city's wealth forever flow into private coffers? These are some of the questions confronting the policy determining authority of every considerable city in this and other countries. Where the merit principle prevails we know what are the answers to these questions. Where the merit principle is absent or is but lamely applied we also know the answers. And in a democratic country these answers are breeding a popular unrest and a political discontent that may well make thoughtful men pause. The baleful compact between the political "boss" and the corporation which exists by public favor and lives by or on the public revenue, if it continues, means the sure destruction of our present form of government, and what may then take its place let wiser men than I foretell.

The powerful forces underlying modern industrial civilization are driving a larger and larger proportion of the population into the cities. In our older States the city dweller already constitutes the majority in the electorate. The City vote chooses the majority of the State legislature. The boss

of the most populous city in the State aspires to be and often is the boss of the State. What makes this possible? Is there any doubt that not the least important reason is the fact that the merit principle is not rigidly enforced in the municipal civil service? Imagine, if you can, a city boss without patronage or hope of any, with nothing to give and nothing to promise save at his own personal expense. Is it not true that so long as the merit principle is absent in municipal administration a corrupting political force is steadily at work producing the political boss and that not only successful municipal government is impossible but the unclean municipal politics begets unclean state politics and steadily tends to create a national government after its own kind? On the other hand, imagine New York City, Buffalo, Troy, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester and the lesser cities of New York State each a city without political patronage within its limits, each a city in whose public service the merit principle wholly prevailed. Municipal government in the State of New York would no longer be a problem.

Civil Service Reform is not by any means the only reform needed, nor will good government be accomplished without the aid of other vital reforms; but every stride forward in Civil Service Reform brings their accomplishment nearer, makes their success more sure; and it is certain that a successful municipal government without the observance of the merit principle in its civil service is unthinkable.



## The Municipal Situation in Ohio.

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BY RUFUS B. SMITH.

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When the forefathers of this republic wrested this country from European and monarchical domination and established the people of the country as its sole rulers, they doubtless believed that no time would arrive when in the slightest degree the people would cease to eagerly and diligently participate in the management of its public affairs.

The country, however, has rapidly developed large cities whose material interests are large, varied and complex, whose government requires the constant employment of thousands of persons, whose annual expenditures run into the millions, but the majority of whose citizens give but little, if any attention to its affairs; either because their private affairs require their almost exclusive attention, or, as said by Mr. Bryce, because "The population is so large that the individual citizen feels himself a drop in the ocean, his power of affecting public affairs seems insignificant, and his pecuniary loss through overtaxation or jobbery or malversation is trivial in comparison with the trouble of trying to prevent such evils."

The result has been what naturally would be expected. The political power of the cities has passed into the control of the few who are willing to make a business of politics, and to devote a large part, and in some cases their entire time and energy to it.

That the citizens of the large cities of the United States are dissatisfied with the government which this few gives them, is a proposition which is so generally conceded that it seems almost unnecessary to affirm it. If denied, one has to read only casually any of the metropolitan journals with the charges and counter charges they contain of maladministration, with the abundant evidence they furnish in most cases to support the charges; to observe the frequency with which legislatures change the form of city governments, in the hope of find-

ing some form which will obviate all evils; to observe the apparently fickle and bewildered manner in which the people vote into power first one party and then another party or one set of men under the name of a party and then another set, and again return to those at first voted out and back again, progressing always in a circle and never forward; to note the public expressions of opinion in all assemblies of men that are not partisan in character; or to hear the expressions of opinion on every side in private life.

The large cities of Ohio constitute no exception in the matter of municipal government to the other large cities of the Union. The same conditions surround them that surround the other cities of the country. They are no better and they are no worse.

It is believed, however, by those who are in sympathy with the purposes of this association that the great, underlying radical cause of the mis-government of American cities, is their failure to recognize and apply the principles for which this association contends; and that if the people of the large cities of Ohio will recognize this fact they will find in it a solution of this vexed and unsettled problem of municipal government.

What is the vital principle of civil service reform? To what extent has it been applied in the large cities of Ohio? Has the failure to apply it been a potent cause of their mis-government? Is there any reason why it should not be generally adopted as a part of a permanent municipal policy in Ohio? These and kindred questions are pressing for solution in this State.

The vital principle of civil service reform is simply this: That the person in the community best fitted to discharge the duties of a subordinate non-elective position and who is willing to serve shall be appointed to the same, and that he shall continue to serve until death, old age or other sufficient cause affecting his competency to discharge the duties of the office disqualify him from longer service.

To what extent has this principle been applied in the municipalities of Ohio?

Generally speaking, it may be stated that it was early recognized by the people of Ohio that the teachers in the public schools and the subordinates in the fire departments must not be changed at every municipal election if the degree of effi-

ency which is necessary to make such departments successful is to be secured. Consequently, long before any laws had found their way upon the statute books, permanency of tenure, with removal only for cause, came to be demanded by public opinion, and constituted a sort of unwritten law which officials dared not, at least, openly or generally, violate. Within recent years, however, this public opinion has found partial expression in the statutes, and in 1895 a law was passed which declared that all teachers who shall have served seven successive years in the public schools of cities of the first grade of the first class, whether before or after or partly before or after the passage of the act should when appointed hold their positions until removed by death, resignation or for cause.

This act has placed several hundred of the teachers of this city upon a legal basis of permanent tenure and every year adds many to their number.

It is also provided by law that no teacher shall be employed in any public school of the State who has not shown himself or herself qualified by passing a required examination, and receiving a certificate of competency; but unfortunately the selection from those holding a teacher's certificate is entirely a matter of favor with the appointing power.

As respects the fire departments, it is also now provided by law that in this City and in Cleveland, Toledo and Dayton, no subordinate can be removed except for cause, although the power of removal is with the board that appoints and no examination of competency is required by law before an appointment can be made.

It will thus be seen that the statutory provisions with respect to the public schools and the fire departments are not as complete or as wide in their application as the true principles of civil service reform would demand; yet many of these deficiencies are supplied by an enlightened public opinion which makes a certain unwritten law in regard to the same.

As a result of this written and unwritten law the appointees in these departments abstain from active participation in politics and are never openly, at least, a part of any political machine; and the departments, especially when compared to the other departments of municipal government, may be said to be upon a fairly satisfactory basis, with much to be hoped for, it is true, but with a steady development in the right direc-

tion, which development in the course of time, it is hoped, will result in the adoption of all the principles of civil service reform, when any evils that now exist in the departments will disappear.

Up to within a comparatively recent period, however, the police departments of the large cities, as is still true of the smaller municipalities of the State, were overhauled with the incoming of every new mayor. All who were either politically opposed to the new mayor, either because of affiliation with the opposite party or with an opposing faction in his own party, were put to the sword, and a new force mustered in, whose main, and generally whose sole claim to position, was that of loyalty to the political fortunes of the new mayor. As municipal elections are frequent in this State and the terms of officers short, the police force was in an almost constant state of demoralization. It necessarily became a huge political machine, bent upon selfish ends, yet wearing the cloth and invested with the baton of the police power of the State.

When a mayor was to be nominated the police force of the city filled the convention hall of their party clamoring and insisting as individuals and officials for the nomination of their favorites; and when the election came on they surrounded the polling booths, electioneering for their candidate, assuming to be guardians of the peace, yet arresting upon mere pretence, intimidating under color of office, and resorting to acts of fraud and violence to elect their candidate.

This conduct finally became so scandalous and notorious that public opinion became aroused and demanded their retirement from active participation in politics. A reform police law was enacted. Applicable at first only to the City of Cincinnati, it was subsequently followed by other laws substantially similar, which were applicable to many other large cities of the State. The law as applied to this city may be briefly stated as follows: The mayor has power to make appointments as a matter of favor subject to the approval of a non-partisan board of police commissioners, appointed by the Governor, and no removal can be made except for cause upon charges filed before and heard by the board. While not required by law so to do, the board, nevertheless, compels a practical examination of an appointee to determine his fitness before it gives its approval to the appointment.

In this city, by reason of the civil service features alluded to, as if by the touch of a magician's wand, the demoralized and lawless police force gave way to a splendid body of men of superb physique, upright conduct and great efficiency, the only faults which the system has shown arising from the power of the mayor to appoint as a matter of favor. Yet the system as a whole has been so great an improvement over the old one, that no public man to-day would venture to suggest a return to the old system. Such a suggestion would encounter the hearty and unanimous condemnation of all citizens, irrespective of party.

The principle, however, of selection and promotion for merit, and retention during good behavior, which, to the extent I have described it, prevails in the administration of the school, fire and police departments of this and many other large cities of this State, as yet in no degree has been applied to the other subordinate positions in our municipal government. In all other departments, in the main, what is known as the spoils doctrine has prevailed, borrowing its title from the famous declaration "To the victors belong the spoils."

The fact that a different system has prevailed in the other departments is not due to the fact that the public mind, having been directed to the subject, and having been advised in regard to it, and having considered the arguments for and against it, has decided upon its adoption, but is due to the fact that the people have not heretofore realized the dangers of the system when applied to departments other than the police, fire and school departments, and to a vague feeling that the merit system is undemocratic and un-American and that the spoils system is absolutely essential to the maintenance of political parties.

The advocates of the merit system are convinced that these objections are not well founded, and so far as the members of this association are concerned, no arguments are necessary to confirm those convictions; but in as much as the local association at the next session of the Ohio Legislature, which meets in January, will present for enactment a bill which looks towards placing all the subordinate positions in the large cities under the operation of civil service reform laws, the occasion seems to be opportune, pertinent and important for a submission to the people of this State, under the

auspices of the meeting of this association of a brief statement of the reasons why the civil service in the large cities of the State should be reformed along the lines suggested by the advocates of this movement.

What is the purpose of the organization of a city? What is the mission it is called upon to perform? It has little, if anything, to do with questions affecting the political rights of its citizens; those questions upon which his rights to person and property depend. Such as, for instance, questions relating to the creation and punishment of crimes, except mere minor offenses, the mode of acquiring and transferring and the devolution of property, of making and discharging contracts, or of recovering for injuries to person, property or character. Such questions and questions of a kindred nature fall strictly within the domain of Federal and State legislation.

A municipal corporation is organized for business purposes, of which the following are illustrations: to furnish adequate police and fire protection: to provide good streets and sidewalks and to keep them clean and in repair; to provide good schools, pure water, sufficient parks, and proper sewer and sanitary arrangements; to determine as to the proper manner of laying gas and water pipes, of erecting telegraph and telephone poles, and of laying rails for street railroads; and to determine whether the municipality shall own and operate its own gas works, water works, and street railroads, and if not, upon what terms such franchises shall be granted to private persons or corporations.

In the discharge of its various functions as a business corporation, in large cities, a great number of persons must necessarily be constantly employed in non-elective positions.

In the city of Cincinnati the number of such persons runs into the thousands, and the annual expenditure in salaries and wages, runs into the millions. Thus, in the city of Cincinnati, in the year 1896, there were employed in non-elective positions 5513 persons; and in the county of Hamilton, of which the city of Cincinnati in population and wealth constitutes the main part, there were employed 262 persons, making a total employment, in both the city of Cincinnati and the county of Hamilton, of 5771 persons. The amount thus expended in salaries and wages in the city of Cincinnati was \$2,830,555.94; and in the county of Hamilton, \$303,659.00; making a total

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It is true that unsuccessful municipal corporations are not wound up in the courts of bankruptcy (although an application was recently made to an Ohio court by a tax-payer of one of our populous and wealthy cities to have a receiver appointed for the City). A municipal corporation must continue its existence. A failure, however large or disastrous, must be continually met by the tax-payers; and whatever indebtedness may have been incurred by officials in the past, from the very nature and purposes of the organization of a municipal corporation, its officers are continually authorized to and must make further expenditures. Otherwise the community lapses into a state of anarchy.

Considered, therefore, merely in the abstract as a question of business principle, the mode of selecting the employees of large cities in Ohio violates the first and most elementary principle of business; and ordinary foresight (if the lessons of experience were lacking, which they are not) could predict the following evils as a result of its adoption.

**FIRST:** A large part of the time following the election of the officers elected by the people which should be devoted to the consideration of questions of municipal policy is occupied in hearing and deciding as to which one of twenty applicants shall receive the appointment to each one of the subordinate positions under him. In this city a recently elected official who has the appointment of sixteen subordinates stated to me that for these sixteen positions there were seven hundred applicants, all of whose claims, together with those of their numerous supporters, were heard and considered by him.

**SECOND:** The appointments being temporary and the appointees frequently changing, a considerable time is occupied in each administration in learning the duties of the position; a larger force of persons is therefore required to discharge the duties of the office, increasing thereby the expenses of the departments; and at each municipal election, which may determine the tenure of office of the employees, a demoralization more or less wide spread and extending over a considerable period of time and affecting the efficiency of the service, necessarily follows.

**THIRD:** A large number of persons is continually attracted by the hope of getting into the public service and devote valuable time and energy to this end only at last to be



disappointed; while those who are successful and secure positions retain them generally only for a length of time sufficient to take them out of the current of legitimate business, finding upon their effort to return that during their absence the business current has swept by them and from the fact that they have held public office business men look askance or with positive disfavor upon their applications.

There are other evils of the spoils system, however, which could not be foreseen in advance of its adoption by the large municipalities, but which practical experience in Ohio has demonstrated to be an inseparable concomitant of it. The most important of them may be enumerated briefly as follows:

*First:* The business of our large cities has become so complex and vast and requires so much attention that the average man in a large city finds it impossible to keep informed in regard to it. Sooner or later, therefore, it is found that one man or set of men who devote a large part and in some cases their entire time to politics, will come into the control of the party machinery, then of the conventions, and if the party is successful at the polls then of the offices, and with the offices of the subordinate positions in the same. The method by which this control is secured is well understood. The influence of such men quickly becomes sufficiently great to nominate for one of the principal offices some one who is satisfied with the salary of the office, and in order to secure the same, is quite willing to agree that those who secure him the nomination may appoint the subordinates under him; then another office is added upon the same terms; and then another, until all the subordinate positions, for all political purposes, are in control of the oligarchy.

If these appointments to the subordinate positions are judiciously made with reference to the ability of the appointees to be elected delegates from their respective precincts, the control of such men becomes riveted. Nothing short of a popular uprising can affect it. Once having secured control, all manner of persons and corporations who wish to use the combination flock to its support; but these latter influences are only aids and not the main support of the combination which is founded upon patronage, with which the army of followers are supported. Cut off the patronage and you destroy the army; for without patronage the leaders could neither

attract or retain such a following. You can not cut off the patronage by abolishing the positions, for a large number of such positions is required to discharge the business of the city. But once let the subordinates know that they can retain their positions until discharged for cause, and that their only hope of advancement is through the faithful discharge of the duties of the positions they are filling and the call or order of neither leader nor leaders will give them any concern. From that moment the army is disbanded.

It may be inquired whether there is anything criminal or unlawful in this seizure of power by a few men? And whether such seizure is not one of the prizes of politics? The answer is, that there is not necessarily anything either criminal or unlawful in it, and that it is the legitimate and inevitable result of the spoils system applied to the offices of a large municipal corporation. But this very argument in justification of those who possess the power is a condemnation of the system which permits it: and the belief has ripened into a conviction in the minds of the electors of the large cities of Ohio, that the temptations to use such power for personal and sordid ends in one or all of the many avenues which such a power opens to its possessors, are too great to be entrusted with safety to them.

That civil service reform will destroy and prevent such control of a party is illustrated by the effect of the Federal Law upon the politics of this city. Prior to 1883 when that law was passed, the men who exerted the largest control over the nominations and conventions of the party were found in the Federal offices. Since 1883 such office holders have had but little more influence, if any, than they would have had if they had not held office.

*Second:* An inevitable result of the spoils system as demonstrated by its operation in Ohio, is that it increases the number and salaries of the subordinates, but decreases their efficiency. The explanation of these facts is that the greater the number of places and the more attractive the salaries, the greater the power of those in control: consequently there is a constant tendency to increase the number of employees: and as appointments are made mainly upon the ground of political service to the appointing power and not upon the ground of ability to discharge the duties of the office, the service is necessarily inferior to what it should be.

It is not contended that all subordinates under the spoils system are either dishonest or inefficient. Undoubtedly in this city there are many subordinates possessing both these qualifications. What is contended is, that under the merit system it will be found that as a general rule a larger percentage is found in the possession of these qualifications: and therefore the expense of running the office is correspondingly less.

*Third:* The influence of those in control of a party and assuming to speak for it is not limited to their own locality, but extends throughout the State, the legislature of which if in control of the same party grants any legislation that may be asked, excusing itself upon the plea that the legislation asked is a mere local matter in regard to which they must seek the advice of party leaders: whereas in fact the real reason is that most of the legislators, being ambitious of State honors, which must be secured through their party, are afraid to offend so overpowering a force in the party: or give their vote in exchange for votes in favor of local schemes which they wish to put through for their own localities.

*Fourth:* It is the practice of all parties in Ohio, on the occasion of each election, through the regularly constituted party committees to levy assessments upon those occupying subordinate positions for the purpose of raising a fund to assist the party in its contest at the polls. The ground upon which these assessments are levied is that the subordinate owes his position to the favor of a political party, and good faith to the party as well as self-interest requires that he should assist the party to maintain itself and win victories.

However effective the aid rendered to the party by the subordinate in the past may have been, no temporary disapproval of candidates or party policy or even personal poverty will be accepted as an excuse for omission to pay the assessment. An assessment levied must be paid or the penalty of a discharge from the position is rigidly enforced.

This practice is a legitimate result of the spoils system which regards the power of appointment and discharge as the perquisite of a political party instead of an attribute of government to be exercised solely in its own interest.

If it be conceded that a true public spirit would induce the subordinate as it would induce every other person in the community to contribute to his party such an amount as he could

afford ; yet certainly it will not be contended that assessments are levied by political committees to enforce this moral obligation resting upon the subordinate; for the assessment is made without any inquiry as to whether the subordinate favors the candidates or the policy of the party which levies the assessment; and even if he is in sympathy with the candidates or the party policy it will not be seriously contended that the assessments are delicately adjusted by political committees to enforce the duty upon the subordinate, to which each citizen whether in office or out should respond. The assessments always go far beyond that limit. In Ohio in recent years they have been annually four per cent. of the salary.

If the subordinate can afford to pay these large assessments, then the salary or wages are beyond what they should be and the assessments in effect come out of the public treasury.

If the subordinate cannot afford to pay them they are an imposition and by decreasing his earnings tend to promote speculation and theft to reimburse himself.

*Fifth.* The evils of the spoils system heretofore considered, whether with respect to the government or the subordinate are of a material character.

There is, however, a moral aspect of the question which should not be overlooked.

The spoils system tends to lower the standard of patriotism by placing it on a mercenary basis. It teaches that the government is something to prey upon, that office is party plunder intended to benefit a party and the individual who fills the office; not an honorable distinction whose object is the serving of the whole people.

It tends also to destroy free thought and open expression of opinion and makes mere automatons of a large part of the young and old men of the nation or turns them into hypocrites lest they may fail to enjoy the fleshpots of office. Thus upon a republican government whose every institution should cultivate the spirit of patriotism and democracy is fastened a system which is constantly at work to destroy such a spirit.

But it is insisted that notwithstanding these objections to the spoils system we must bear with it because the objections to the merit or civil service reform system are even greater. These objections are mainly of two kinds.

The leaders and managers of the political parties in Ohio

have continuously insisted at all times and places, by argument and persuasion, by taunts and sneers, by charges of party disloyalty and by threats of party resentment and ostracism, that the spoils system is absolutely essential to the support of a political party and that without its existence political parties cannot maintain themselves or secure victories and therefore cannot accomplish the purpose of their organization.

As was said by Mr. Schurz, in his masterly address last night, this argument should be spurned by every true American as an insult to his patriotism. If the American people cannot be aroused to an interest in those great party questions which mark our political campaigns, unless a certain portion of them, in case of the success of the party with which they ally themselves, are to be paid for their interest by an office, then patriotism among the American people is a thing of the past, popular government in America is a failure, and the American Commonwealth is on the rocks.

The truth, however, is that instead of the appointing power being a source of strength, it becomes, in course of time, a source of weakness to any official or party that may exercise it; for the disappointments outnumber the appointments twenty to one. In this city the principal administrative board which has an immense civil patronage within its control, within the last ten years, sooner or later has defeated every party that controlled it, and, as the pendulum of popular disfavor swung to and fro, has been successively called the Board of Public Works, the Board of City Affairs, the Board of Public Improvement, the Board of Public Affairs, and the Board of Administration.

The last two elections in this city and county illustrate the same truth. In the Presidential election of 1896 Hamilton county gave McKinley 19,000 majority. Six months after at the municipal election in Cincinnati, without any reason for a change of view upon the political questions which had been the issues at the Presidential election the Republican candidate for mayor was defeated by 7,000; and at the election of this fall the entire Republican ticket including the legislative ticket, whose election might decide the fate of a United States Senator, was again defeated. Yet in this city and county the spoils system had been carried by the Republican party to perfection; and if one of the great virtues of the spoils system is that it

wins party victories, certainly when the election of a United States Senator was at stake it should have vindicated its claim in this respect. On the contrary the system here having worked out its inevitable and logical result in investing the absolute control of the party in the hands of a few men, the popular indignation and resentment was so great at the possession of such power that, coupled with the disappointments for office, the entire party was disastrously defeated.

Yet so accustomed has the community become to these political revolutions that many seem unable to comprehend the significance of the same; and upon each occasion assert that the defeat is due to the persons who happened to be in control and not to the system that makes such control possible. Consequently new men in the Republican party and the old leaders in the Democratic party are pushing themselves to the front, appearing to think that in the last two elections they recognize a call long delayed to take charge of their respective parties and through the parties of the people; and that this city is rapidly passing into the control of another set of men, is too apparent for denial. The first act of the new administration was to discharge forty-six City Hall employees, including fifteen women who scrubbed the floors, without the slightest inquiry as to whether any of such employees were efficient or not. The same course will undoubtedly be followed with respect to all the other departments of the city as soon as the newly elected officers secure control; and from the ruins of one political machine will arise another.

What profit is there in all this for the people? Can they not see that if they wish to free themselves from political machines change of persons is immaterial? What is necessary is a change of system.

Recurring again for a moment to the argument that the spoils system is necessary for party success—Is it not true that if the spoils system is necessary to party success, and as all the great political questions of the day are largely determined by a contention between opposing parties, that the people of this community are recreant to their duty as citizens and patriots in allowing any part of the municipal government to be removed from the operation of the spoils system, and ought there to be any delay in placing the public schools, the fire and police departments upon the spoils basis? Surely the

logic of the argument requires this result and the advocates of it should not shrink from the result to which their argument inevitably leads them.

I come now to consider the remaining objection to the merit system, viz., that it is un-American and aristocratic both in principle and practice. In principle, for the reason that rotation in office is the only system which gives an opportunity to every one in the community to aspire to and hold office, whereas the merit system excludes all but those who are so fortunate as to have had the advantages of a higher education and by continuing them in office builds up an aristocratic class in the community; and un-American in practice, for the reason that the examinations are not adapted to making a fair test of the qualifications of applicants but are impractical, technical, pedantic and scholastic, discriminating in favor of the few and beyond the reach of the plain people.

I fear that this objection has great weight in the minds of a very large number of well-intentioned people in this community and that they must be convinced that it is erroneous before the merit system can be assured of popular support. Fortunately the objection, like every other one that is made to it, is found, upon examination, to be fallacious and unfounded.

Our government is founded upon the principle that no man shall be born to office nor receive it as a favor from the powerful or privileged, but shall hold it because he has demonstrated by his ability or character that he is entitled to it. The merit system is simply an application of this principle to the minor non-elective positions of the government and is, therefore, the only true American system; the only one worthy of a true democracy. Instead of being a system that discriminates in favor of any particular class it is the only one that is entirely free from that objection. Political, religious or social influences count for nothing. The applicant must vindicate his right to the position for which he applies by his superior fitness to fill it. If he does that he receives the appointment. If he does not and another man does, what right has he to demand of the public that the latter shall be put aside and the public be compelled to accept his inferior service.

The contention, too, that the system builds up a privileged class and creates an aristocracy in the community, would be laughable if it were not seriously urged by well-intentioned

persons. The average annual compensation of the subordinates in the large cities of Ohio would probably not be over \$700 or \$800 a year. Imagine an aristocracy, most of whom have families to support and educate, with an income of \$800 a year. What luxurious practices borrowed from the effete monarchies of the old world and what insolence of office we should be compelled to endure from such a class! What an aristocracy the teachers of the public schools and the members of the police and fire departments in this city now constitute! What a demoralizing influence in our community is their extravagant and purse-proud mode of life!

As to the impractical character of the examinations—it is not true that the merit system necessitates impractical examinations. In support of this statement I wish to quote from the report for 1896 of the Civil Service Commission of Chicago, a city which a few years ago, by a popular vote, adopted the merit system. The report says:

“In regard to the competitive examinations provided for in the act, grave misunderstanding has existed in the public mind, which the commission would be glad to dispel. For this purpose, and as a matter of general information, there will be found attached to this report a number of examination papers taken at random from those that have been used in examinations held by the commission for different positions in the public service. It has been supposed by many that these examinations were in all cases made to test the *education* or *scholarship* of the applicant. Nothing could be further from the truth. The law requires that the examinations ‘shall be practical in their character.’ In all examinations for laborers, or for positions where only strength or mechanical skill is required there is no educational test whatever. For clerical and professional positions educational and technical tests are applied, but in every case, as the law requires, the examination is adapted to the requirements of the position to be filled and the advice and the assistance of men practically acquainted with the duties of the position is availed of in preparing the papers and in conducting the examinations.”

Is not this method of examination fair and just to every one?

Has a man ignorant of engineering—or, if not entirely ignorant, not possessed of sufficient knowledge to discharge



the duties of the position—any right to demand of the public that he be employed as an engineer? Or a man who has no knowledge of drugs or their application a right to demand a position in the sanitary department which requires such a knowledge; or a man who reads and writes imperfectly, that he be employed as a clerk or accountant? And does not the standard adopted by the Civil Service Commission of Chicago open a wide field for employment in which the selections are not made by any test which requires either education or scholarship. We must learn to accustom ourselves to the idea that appointments should be made to benefit the public and not the appointee, and that a municipal government is neither a training school nor an infirmary. When that is done the difficulties that many minds seem to have with this question will disappear.

The contention, too, that under the merit system the men and women of college education will monopolize the best subordinate positions by reason of their greater ability to pass difficult examinations is found in practice to be illusory and without foundation; either because very few persons with a college education make application for these positions or because if they do they meet with no greater success than other persons. A good illustration of this fact is the one given last night by Mr. Schurz when he stated that in Massachusetts out of 9,323 persons successfully passing the examinations during eight years, only 157 were college graduates.

An argument quite commonly made in defense of the spoils system is that an officer elected by the people, and held responsible for his office by force of that circumstance and by analogy to a private business should be allowed to select his own subordinates; and that the merit system forces upon him men who are not of his own selection.

It is true that an officer is held responsible for the failures of his office so far as those failures are attributable to him, and no further. If any subordinate forced upon him is incompetent the merit system provides for a method of discharge, and if the subordinate unexpectedly proves dishonest, such dishonesty, where the merit system prevails, is not charged to him, nor is he compelled to bear the burdens of the same.

So far as the right of the elective officer to select his subordinates as the owner of a private business selects them is

concerned, it is a sufficient answer to say that under the spoils system while in theory he has such right, in practice he has not, because in practice his subordinates are selected for him by the managers of the political party to which he belongs.

To judge from the arguments that are urged to-day in this State against the adoption of civil service reform, one who was not informed on the subject would suppose that its advocates were attempting to impose upon the State a theoretical, utopian system, born only in the minds of dreamers, and advocated only by those who believe in "lunar politics." The truth, however, is that with the exception of Turkey and Morocco and certain South American Republics, the only civilized nation upon the face of the globe which adopts the spoils system, with respect to municipal government, is the United States; and it is one of the remarkable inconsistencies of the present American situation that on a subject which is largely practical in its nature, the American people, whose progress in the last century has shown them to be the most practical people of the world, possessing what may be termed a very genius for practical work, should be found in this department of practical life to be so far behind the civilized world as to rank with Turkey and Morocco.

The States of Massachusetts and New York, both of which have adopted the merit system, and the City of Chicago, have begun the advance. In these places, with the exception, I believe, of New York City, where the law has not been faithfully enforced, the new system has given the greatest satisfaction. Shall Ohio lag behind? Shall a State whose boast is that it contains more colleges than any other state in the Union still continue to do business upon Turkish principles?

At the last session of the Legislature in 1896 a civil service bill prepared by the local association was presented to the Legislature but was defeated. It passed the Senate, but was reconsidered there and defeated and never reached the house.

Another bill will be presented this winter. It does not impose the merit system upon the municipalities but leaves it to popular vote in each municipality to determine whether it shall be adopted. Can the Legislature of Ohio give any valid reason why the people of Cincinnati, Cleveland and the other cities of Ohio should not be permitted to vote upon this ques-

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justice and in the end they must prevail—their ultimate triumph is assured.

The subject invites to further discussion, but the limit of time forbids.

In closing I desire to express to the local association my appreciation of the honor shown me by its invitation to address the National Association upon this occasion. The names of many of the members of the National Association and the work of its members are familiar to every one who watches the progress of the better forces in American life. The distinguished services and high purposes of the association pursued with no motive but that of a patriotic desire of its members to benefit their fellow countrymen, gives assurance that in the future as in the past, the time will never come to this nation when the political abuses of the day will not find in opposition to them a disinterested and fearless class of men against whom "the gates of Hell shall not prevail." Upon such men the taunts and sneers which every movement for reform encounters, seem only to strengthen their arms and purpose and to clarify their brains. If at any time there come to such persons moments of depression, let them remember the words of a former president of this association now dead, but whose soul is marching on,—George William Curtis,—who, in reply to the sneers against the Pharisees of reform said:

"No American, it seems to me, is so unworthy the name as he who attempts to defend any national abuse or tries to hide it or who derides as pessimists and Pharisees those who indignantly disown it or raise the cry of reform. If a man proposes the redress of any public wrong he is asked severely whether he considers himself so much wiser and better than other men that he must disturb the existing order and pose as a saint. If he denounces an evil, he is exhorted to beware of spiritual pride. If he points out a dangerous public tendency or censures the action of a party, he is advised to cultivate good humor, to look on the bright side, to remember that the world is a very good world, at least, the best going, and very much better than it was a hundred years ago. Undoubtedly it is, but would it have been better if everybody had then insisted that it was the best of all possible worlds, and that we must not despond if sometimes a cloud gathers in the sky

. . . When the sea is pouring into the ship through an open seam, everybody is aware of it. But then it is too late. It is the watch who reports the first starting of the seam who saves the ship.

“It is an ill sign when public men find in exposure and denunciations of public abuses evidences of the Pharisaic disposition and a tendency in the critic to think himself holier than other men.

\* \* \* \* \*

“To the cant about the Pharisaism of reform there is but one short and final answer. The man who tells the truth *is* a holier man than the liar. The man who does not steal *is* a better man than the thief.”

7

# CONSTITUTION

OF THE

## National Civil-Service Reform League.

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I.

The name of this organization shall be the National Civil-Service Reform League.

II.

The object of the National Civil Service Reform League shall be to promote the purposes and to facilitate the correspondence and the united action of the Civil Service Reform Associations.

III.

The League shall consist of all the Civil Service Reform Associations in the United States which signify their willingness to become members thereof. Any association hereafter expressing such willingness shall become a member of the League upon its being accepted as such by the League or the Executive Committee. Any member of any such association may be present at any meeting of the League and take part in the debates or discussions as the by-laws may provide.

IV.

At any meeting of the League, each association belonging to it shall be entitled to one vote upon every question coming before the League; such vote may be cast by a personal representative designated by each association, or by proxy, as the by-laws may provide. If no such designation be made the delegates from such association present at such meeting, or a majority of them, may cast the vote of such association.

## V.

The officers of the League shall be a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and nine Vice-Presidents; and there shall be a General Committee and an Executive Committee. The officers and the committees shall hold office until their successors are appointed or elected.

## VI.

The President and Vice-Presidents shall be elected by ballot at the annual meeting of the League.

The Secretary and Treasurer shall be chosen, and may be removed, by the General Committee.

The General Committee shall be chosen annually, and shall consist of one delegate from each association belonging to the League; and one additional delegate for every two hundred members, or major fraction thereof, of such association as certified by its secretary. Each association shall elect its own delegates in such manner as it may determine.

The members of the Executive Committee shall be ex-officio members of the General Committee.

Any member of the General Committee may act by proxy.

The General Committee shall keep a record of its proceedings, and shall make a report to the League at the annual meeting. A vacancy in any office, except that of Vice-President, may be filled by the General Committee for the remainder of the term.

The General Committee may delegate to the Executive Committee any of its powers; provided, however, that it may at any time resume the powers so delegated.

The Executive Committee shall consist of twenty-one members to be elected annually by the General Committee and shall have power to fix its own quorum. And any member of the Executive Committee may act by proxy.

## VII.

The General Committee may, subject to these articles, manage the affairs of the League, direct and dispose of the

funds, and may, from time to time, make and modify by-laws for the League and for its own action.

No debt shall be contracted, nor shall any appropriation of money be made, by the League or by the General Committee, beyond the amount in the hands of the Treasurer.

### VIII.

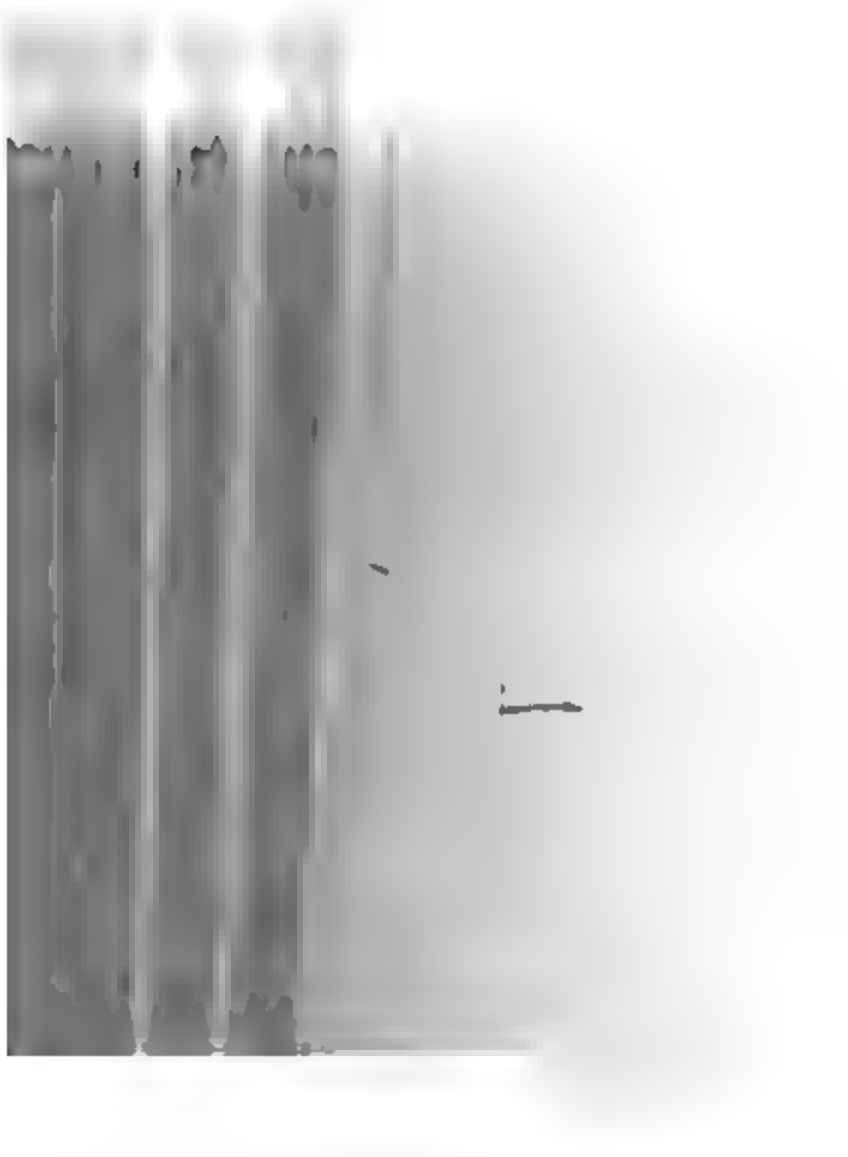
There shall be an annual meeting of the League at such time in each year, and at such place as the General Committee may determine, at which officers shall be elected for the ensuing year, and other appropriate business may be transacted.

A meeting of the League may be called at the discretion of the General Committee whenever any association belonging to it notifies the Secretary of the League of its desire to have such a meeting, and the President may at any time call a meeting of the League.

### IX.

Any provision of this Constitution may be suspended or amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any meeting of the General Committee, due notice of such proposed suspension or amendment having been given at a previous meeting. Any association belonging to the League may, through its representatives, propose amendments to the Constitution which may be approved under the same conditions.









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PROCEEDINGS

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF

THE NATIONAL CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM LEAGUE

HELD AT

CINCINNATI, OHIO, DEC. 16 AND 17, 1897.

WITH THE ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT,

AND OTHER MATTERS

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NEW YORK,

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1897

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